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ALAN WILLIAM JONES B.Ed.

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THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS

ACROSS THE INFANT-JUNIOR TRANSFER

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EDUCATION

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THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS, TEACHER AND PARENTS
ACROSS THE INFANT-JUNIOR TRANSFER.

ABSTRACT

This research sets out to examine some of the social processes involved in the transfer across the infant-junior interface within a traditional primary school context by a consideration of the perceptions of pupils, teachers and parents concerned with this transfer. A survey of existing transfer-related research suggests that, in its concern with transfer at such an early stage of schooling, within a school situation and in a school in an exclusively middle class setting, the research is without any direct parallel. The theoretical position adopted by the researcher is essentially that of Symbolic Interactionism, although a recognition is made of the social structural context in which interaction occurs. In the definition of a suitable strategy for the collection of research data, the methodology of, "Illuminative Evaluation" promulgated by Parlett and Hamilton has been adopted. Following a description of the school setting of the research, the pre and post-transfer perceptions of the groups are presented separately. The perceptions of the three groups are then discussed in relation to the theoretical stance adopted and to other transfer and non-transfer related research.

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

This research sets out to examine some of the social processes involved in the transfer across the infant-junior interface in a traditional primary school context. It seeks to achieve this aim by a consideration of the perceptions of pupils, teachers and parents concerned with this transfer.

The field work was undertaken during the Summer and Autumn terms of 1979 in the primary school at which the researcher had been employed until June 1979. The choice of the infant-junior transfer as the subject of the research was made because it was evident to the researcher that this transition within the school was being increasingly recognised as a problem area by both teachers and parents, particularly since the reorganisation of the junior classes into a two-band system of vertical grouping. This reorganisation had, not only highlighted the question of continuity in the school generally, but also created a situation which often led to considerable changes in the social grouping of pupils across the interface. This re-organisation, together with the more general problems of adjustment associated with any transfer situation between classes within a school, served to highlight the infant-junior transition as an aspect of the school process worthy of the researcher's particular attention.

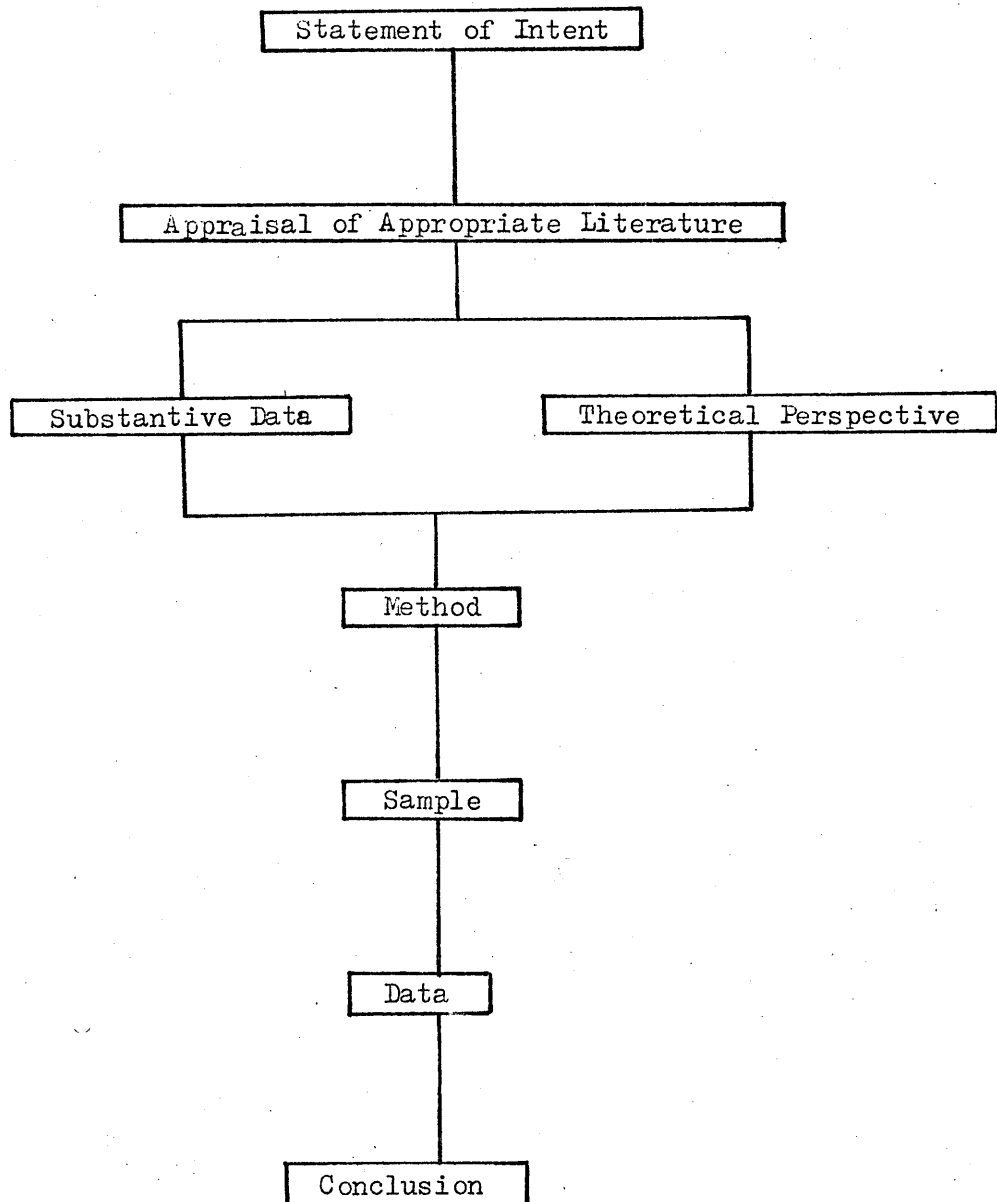
The restriction of the research to a case study of one particular school undoubtedly raises difficulties with regard to the generalisation of any findings. The reader might particularly question the typicality of the school in its organisation into

separate infant and junior departments and in its singularly uniform middle class catchment area. However, whilst recognising that, because of the case study nature of the research, any findings can only describe the particular school, the researcher would argue that the former organisation is by no means untypical of the larger primary schools in the region. Moreover, he would suggest that the choice of a school in a middle class catchment area could, perhaps, be validated by the neglect of British Educational Research with such areas because of the emphasis placed in recent years, however justifiably, on more socially disadvantaged locations. Another potential difficulty associated with the research, and acknowledged by the researcher, is his former close involvement with the school in question. To some extent, this problem was alleviated by the researcher's transfer to another school at the time the field work was initiated, a move which, hopefully, increased his level of detachment whilst not lessening the background of "inside information" he had regarding the school situation. And in this respect, therefore, any reservations held concerning the researcher's degree of detachment in the collection and collation of data must be weighed against the advantages gained from the level of knowledge of the school with which the researcher was able to approach the research.

In the attempt to examine the social processes involved in the infant-junior transfer within the chosen school situation, the researcher will, first of all, undertake a review of literature already available upon the subject of transfer. An

appraisal may then be made of any relevance it might have for this research, particularly in the formulation of an appropriate theoretical approach and methodology. The research data itself will be presented in two sections: the first dealing with the school setting of the research and the second with the pre and post-transfer perceptions of the individuals and groups concerned with the transfer. In order to meet any potential criticism that individual and group responses in principle can be construed as being of different status, the responses gathered in a one to one situation and those gained during group interviews or by questionnaire will be separated. An advantage of such a strategy will be the opportunity it presents for a comparison of responses gathered in different situations or by different sampling techniques. The main disadvantage for the reader will be that it may, perhaps inevitably, lead to some repetition of the data collected. Finally, there will be a discussion of the data obtained in the course of the research.

This diagram sets out the strategy followed in the study:



1

SURVEY OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

A review of literature already available upon the subject of transfer is an essential undertaking for the researcher. Initially, it serves to identify any problems which might be associated with research into this area and to sharpen the researcher's own thinking of the issues involved in transfer as an aspect of the school process. More importantly, it presents the researcher with an opportunity to appraise those theoretical stances which have already been adopted in previous research strategies with a view to the formulation of a strategy appropriate to his particular research.

A consideration of the literature pertaining to transfer soon reveals that the preoccupation of such literature is with transfer to secondary schooling or, more recently, middle schooling. Apart from Plowden's (1967) cursory acknowledgement of the disadvantage of separate infant and junior schools (para. 428) and a vague indication that the children will be apprehensive as well as stimulated by the transfer (para. 427), there is little evidence of interest in the infant/junior transition. The reason for this is unclear. It can only be assumed that it derives either, from the priority traditionally attached to secondary education or, from the assumption that it represents a fundamentally, non-problematical area. The former attitude is, perhaps, reflected in Blyth (1965) who, in his two volumes on Primary Education, devotes only twenty two lines to the infant/junior transfer and argues that the junior/secondary transition, "carries and is intended to carry a considerable individual and social significance which is more far reaching than the transition from infant to junior school." (p.138) These two volumes by Blyth are still considered as the definitive sociological description of English primary schooling.

Yet, historically, it could, perhaps, be argued that the distinction between infant and junior schools could be just as great as that between junior and secondary schools - by virtue of the often contrasting teaching methods employed by infant and junior teachers respectively. Indeed a brief allusion to some of the problems that might arise in an infant/junior transfer situation because of this distinction, was made in a short pamphlet published by The National Association for Mental Health in 1955. The essential difference lies in the fact that transfer to secondary education traditionally involved the change from a general class teacher situation to that of a number of subject specialists, a change which the 1947 report of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland on Secondary Education saw as dramatic (paras. 130 and 131). However, the main concern of the literature and research associated with transfer has not been directly concerned with the difficulties encountered by the pupils or teachers involved, but with the methods used to select pupils for the most appropriate type of secondary school and the most suitable age of transfer to secondary and, subsequently, middle schools.

Research into the methods of selection for the most suitable form of secondary education has little relevance to this study. Suffice it to say that it has, in general, taken two forms: - first of all, research into the validity of the assessment techniques employed (McClelland 1949, N.U.T. 1949, Peel and Rutter 1951, Skeet 1957, Floud 1957, Vernon 1957) and, later, research into the social inequalities revealed by the

selection procedure (Halsey, Floud and Martin 1956; Jackson and Marsden 1962, Douglas et al 1964). The significance of the latter research lies in the influence it had upon the evolution of comprehensive education.

The preoccupation with the age of transfer can be seen, initially, as a response to the fixed age distinction between primary and secondary education which was recommended in the 1926 and 1931 Hadow Reports and made mandatory by the 1944 Act. An historical perspective demonstrates that the Hadow recommendation was a product of administrative arrangements arising from the provision of competitive grammar school places in the 1907 regulations (Hargreaves and Tickle 1980 p.1), the raising of the school leaving age to fourteen in the 1918 Education Act and the desire for a five year course leading to the School Certificate (Blyth 1980 p.20). However, Hadow (1926 p.72) sought to justify this division from contemporary psychology, reasoning that eleven or twelve marked the onset of adolescence and that adolescence called for a different educational approach.

The defects inherent in the psychological justification for a "clean break," however, gave rise in the post war period to a great deal of research disputing its findings across the whole range of psychology and reconsidering the question of the most suitable age for transfer. This research, which is reflected in Plowden's recommendations, finds its most detailed expression in Nisbet and Entwistle's (1966) study, "The Age of Transfer to Secondary Education." Commenced in 1961, this research drew information from contemporary research into the onset of puberty (Tanner 1961, Nisbet and Illsey 1963, Douglas

and Ross 1964), considered both the historical and comparative education perspectives of the age of transfer and surveyed organisational problems of secondary education and the views of fifty one headteachers. Of course, by the time Nisbet and Entwistle had concluded that there was "no correct age." (1966 p.89) of transfer the movement towards comprehensive education in England had begun, the legal restrictions of the 1944 Act regarding the age of transfer having been lifted by the 1964 Act.

Although Nisbet and Entwistle's 1966 research has little direct bearing upon this research, their follow up study commenced in 1963 is more relevant. Referred to in the 1966 publication, this longitudinal study was concerned with the problems that may face children in the transition and was published in 1969. Earlier Blyth (1965) had likened the transfer to the rites of passage from childhood to adolescence in pre-literate societies and pointed to the changes the pass-segees were likely to encounter: - changes in institutional setting, formal structure, size, complexity and location. He had also criticised the lack of communication between the teaching staffs of primary and secondary schools (p.144). Murdock (1966) had analysed a sample of 552 essays written by newly-transferred secondary pupils, comparing their experiences of secondary school with those of primary school. From his analysis Murdoch estimated that 57% of the boys and 64% of the girls had experienced identifiable problems of adjustment but that, after six weeks or more, 80% of the sample preferred their present school. Nisbet and Entwistle, however, not only sampled the subjective reactions of both headteachers

and pupils to transfer but also, during their five year study, attempted to correlate the pupils' attainment and test scores at secondary school with variables such as previous performance, socio-economic rating and parental encouragement. While the implications of their interviews with headteachers were that some children would react adversely to sudden changes at transfer, the results of the analysis of the psychometric data indicated that the kind of child most likely to deteriorate in attainment after entering the secondary school would be a working class child in the younger half of the age group (p.84). They also found an improvement in the attitudes of pupils to one secondary school when the school amended its policy procedure as a result of participation in the survey.

Theoretically, it might be expected that the emergence of middle schools and three-tier systems would provide the opportunity for a wealth of research concerned with transfer which would be relevant to this study. In reality this has not been the case. As Hargreaves and Tickle (1980 p2-4) observe: -

"Questions about how pupils experience three-tier schooling are rarely asked... The perceptions of those who are closely connected with, but not working in middle schools, are also important yet have hardly been researched"...and yet, "The perceptions of individuals engaged in inter processes and the way in which these individuals define situations and relationships is important for the way they act."

In the initial stages of the debate about middle schools one of the major justifying themes was that a delay in the age of transfer could lead to an extension of primary school methods beyond the age of eleven. Sir Alec Clegg developed this theme in the 1963 Report of the West Riding Education Committee

(p3f) and it was reiterated four years later in the Plowden Report (paras.383, 384). It could be construed that such a theme was a reflection of concern associated with the problems arising from the "clean break" mentality. This may or may not be true, but there is evidence (e.g. Bryan & Hardcastle 1977) to suggest that such idealism far from precipitated the movement towards middle schools, rather it was the "more earthy reasons of pragmatism, economy and administrative convenience (which) necessitated their development, "(Hargreaves & Tickle p.17). Whatever the motivation for their emergence, their expansion was dramatic;

"In January 1968, there were no middle schools in the United Kingdom. Ten years later there were 1690."

(Hargreaves & Tickle page 1)

Although, as had been pointed out, there has been no great interest in the perceptions of those involved in the new phenomenon of middle schools, there has been some research which merits attention in relation to this study. Galton and Delamont (1980) have published a comparative study of the first few weeks' experiences of pupils attending two contrasting middle schools. Part of a wider ongoing research programme, this study assesses, by a questionnaire issued four times, changes in the anxiety levels of pupils across the transfer from first to middle school and uses observation techniques and informal interviews to illustrate the contrasting experiences of the pupils in their respective schools. Despite the obviously different initial approaches adopted by the two schools to their new pupils and the fact that the initial questionnaires revealed more anxiety amongst those pupils

about to attend the formal school than those transferring to the informal school, by the end of the first year Galton and Delamont found anxiety levels and teaching - learning process quite similar. In accounting for this the writers point to the contrasts the pupils experienced between their expectations and the reality of the situation. Thus, while the pupils about to attend the superficially 'formal' school were anxious about the expectations, (and bullying) they would encounter, reality proved less onerous - especially once the pressure of the initial adjustment period was relaxed. In contrast the pupils attending the, on the surface, more progressive institution found the reality of the situation far more demanding than their expectations and, following a fairly relaxed start, the pressures were increased over the year and, accordingly, anxiety levels. In conclusion, Galton and Delamont argue that changes in the anxiety level of pupils appear to be related to classroom processes and occasioned, therefore, by problems associated with schooling in general rather than with transfer in particular. To the researcher, however, this distinction between schooling in general and transfer seems somewhat incongruous. In their introduction the writers observe:-

"Children in school have to learn to change, as they move among different subjects different teachers, different work patterns and different classroom climates. When they transfer from one school to another all these other kinds of change coincide."

P.207

and surely what they are saying is that, at transfer, the ordinary classroom processes are highlighted for pupils both in their anticipation and their experience? The significance of transfer lies in the opportunity for pupils to compare and contrast all of those aspects which combine in the classroom

and school process. Rather than a distinct phenomenon apart from the general school process, transfer is the school process as seen through now experienced eyes capable of making predictions, comparisons and judgements.

A study which seems closely aligned to this study is Bryan's (1980) study of pupil perceptions of transfer between middle and high schools. In essence, however, it represents another example of research into the long standing age of transfer question for it sought, "to ascertain whether pupils' perception of transfer varies with the age of transfer and the types of school from and to which they move," (p.228). The data collected was derived from a content analysis of pupil essays before and after transfer, "from a primary to an all-through secondary comprehensive school, and from an eight to twelve - middle and a ten - thirteen middle to corresponding high schools," (p.231). The essay titles were, "My thoughts on changing schools," and, "My thoughts on my new school," and the essays were administered approximately four weeks before the end of the summer term and just before Christmas respectively. A comparison was then made of these perceptions utilising the categories generated by the pupils' responses. Categories included the age of transfer (which is obviously as central to pupils' thoughts as researchers'), material resources, friendship, status, and the organisation of time and school rules. In his discussion Bryan points to the fulfilment

of his expectation that pupils would evaluate their new school in terms of their personal response to teachers and that, in the majority of cases, pupils saw their transfer in retrospect as a desirable stage in their careers, if only because it was their last school or because they could start again with a clean sheet. Overall it was apparent, "that the aspirations and anxieties which pupils express are not particular to a given age, sex, or geographical location and they are consistent with other findings (e.g. Piggott 1977). Thus it would seem that such feelings exist in terms of the passegees' definition of the situation, " (Bryan op cit p.243), an interpretation which is strengthened by the fact that, "according to the responses in this study no pupil was consciously aware of preparation for transfer beyond the allocation of a day or half day visit to the receiving school," (p.243).

Finally, in the context of research into middle schools, teachers' perceptions were explored in Ginsbury and Meyenn's (1980) study of first and upper school teachers' relations with middle school colleagues. Although the research was not specifically concerned with it, transfer assumed its own importance in the semi-structured interviews and discussions which took place with teachers because it marked the point of direct contact between their school and the middle school. One of the most striking points that arose was the large number of both first and upper school teachers who had no clear picture of what was occurring in middle schools - although they had perceptions and attitudes to express! In

general, first school teachers saw the middle school as introducing secondary practices at an earlier age than was the case in the two-tier system, while upper teachers saw middle schools as an extension of the former primary schools. Contact was seen as important but often was less than felt desirable - while examples of give and take in terms of practice were fairly widespread. Most teachers viewed transfer between the schools as satisfactory although the degree of satisfaction varied widely. The passing up of information and the concept of 'within school transition' were seen as important aspects of this. Finally, opinions on the best age for transfer varied from seven to fourteen years.

Apart from some recent research into the middle school situation, the concern with transfer between schools has largely been restricted to that from primary or junior to secondary school. There appears to be a total lack of research into the infant-junior transition. Where the research into transfer has been concerned with perceptions it has largely been motivated by the awareness of problems associated with the 'clean break'. The emergence of Middle School ideology can, perhaps, be seen in part as a response to such an awareness. And an over response, in some situations, has been illustrated by Nash (1973 p.6) who found such problems having turned full circle with pupils from a traditionally based upper junior situation transferring to a progressive secondary school!

In short, the literature so far reviewed has been largely concerned with the stages of transfer and particularly with those stages associated with the later years of schooling. The concern of this research, however, is with the processes of transfer rather than the stages. Process was not a feature of the earlier research into transfer. Rather, process has been a feature of more recent sociological concern and has been particularly a feature of classroom research. How participants perceive a process is influenced greatly by the environment of which they are a part. Accordingly, for both teachers and pupils, classrooms are a very real part of their environment. Material and social environments influence interaction and, perhaps not surprisingly, until recently, the main thrust of classroom research has been interaction analysis, within the field of social psychology. This system for observing and coding the verbal interchange between a teacher and his pupils has been explored amongst others by Withal (1949), Bales (1950), Flanders (1968 and 1970) and Simon and Boyer (1968 and 1970) in America and Stones and Morris (1972) in Britain. However, the methodology adopted in interaction analysis has been essentially psychometric and it has been the subject of strong criticism on the grounds that:- it often ignores the temporal and spatial contexts of the classrooms studied; it takes the researcher's meanings as authoritative and neglects the participants, the pupils' and teachers' actual or self perceived intentions to a series of actions; it is limited by the use of pre-specified categories and the

concern only with what can be measured or categorised and that the categories used focus on small bits rather than global concepts and, therefore, lack the potential to go beyond the categories involved to the development of theories. Such criticisms can be found in the writings of Delamont (1976), Stubbs and Delamont (1976), Greenberg (1967) and Silberman (1970).

The alternative to the interaction analysis approach to classroom research which seems to be favoured by its critics is the open-minded approach which has been variously described as, "social anthropological" (Wragg et al 1976), "micro-ethnographical" (Smith and Geoffreys (1968), "naturalistic" (Macdonald 1970), and "ecological" (Parlett 1969). In reality this approach encompasses a whole range of approaches developed particularly within the disciplines of sociology, psychiatry and anthropology. However, in general, such studies are openly descriptive not being governed by pre-ordained categories, rely more upon an active or participant observer approach and tend to be concerned with case studies rather than surveys. Although not specifically concerned with transfer, there are examples of research coming under the umbrella of this general approach which could be seen as pertinent to this study. Smith and Geoffreys' (1968) study, for example, combines the observations of an observer and participant observer in the exhaustive study of one classroom.* Delamont's (1976) work is argued by Eggleston as presenting

* Lacey (1970) combined both their roles in one.

the first distinctively sociological account of life in the classrooms showing, "how social interaction is influenced by the educational regime and the history of the school, the location and architecture of the room and the perspectives and power positions of teachers and pupils, " (op cit. p.8 Ed Intro). Finally, Sharp and Green (1975) take this point of view somewhat further, by arguing that what goes on in a school is influenced significantly by factors outside the control of the participants i.e. the structural dimensions which influence the perspectives of teachers and cause them, perhaps unwittingly, to employ social controls within the classroom. In addition to this argument Sharp and Green's study is interesting because it is concerned with an infant school and is, in fact, another case study.

Although in this review of literature the researcher has been unable to present the findings of any research directly parallel to the scope of this study, the research already conducted into transfer - albeit at later stages in the school process - has served to highlight some of the substantive issues which need to be explored in the main text. For example, the significance of the pupils' ages, the changes in school situation the pupils will encounter, significant problems of adjustment they might face, comparisons and contrasts between pupils' expectations and reality, the significance of friendship patterns and the communications between and perceptions of the teachers in the infant and junior sections of the school, will all need consideration. In addition, the review has

brought into immediate focus the problem of the theoretical assumptions which the research must follow, an integral part of which must be a consideration of what methodology should be adopted in the collection of data appropriate to the scope of the research. It is to this question of the theoretical stance and methodological framework that we now turn.

The concern of the research with the social processes involved in the infant-junior transition clearly places it within the field of sociological interpretation. As Morrish observes, "all human activity involving social relationships is the subject matter of sociology," (Morrish 1972 p.18). The development of the sociology of education as a discipline is arguably traceable from Dewey (1900) through Durkeim, Clarke and Mannheim. The contrasting emphases of the structural functionalist and interactionist approaches to the investigation of social relations with sociology generally can be clearly identified within the more specific area of the sociology of education. Moreover, "for the sociologist the adoption of either an essentially structuralist or interactionist perspective reflects a particular view of the status of individuals or groups under scrutiny. Whether the organisational patterns of school or schooling impose a particular definition of the situation on teachers or pupils, or whether these participants negotiate is a crucial question in deciding how to approach pupils,"(and in this case parents' and teachers' perception of transfer,)(Bryan '80 Note 1). It is not appropriate to describe here in any detail the conflict arising among sociologists over these contrasting strategies. Suffice it to

say that the limitations seen by some in the structural functionalist point of view both in its consensus and conflict approaches, have led to the re-emergence of a 'new sociology' based upon the Meadian principles of symbolic interactionism. For such critics, the limitations of the structuralist perspective, particularly in its application to schools, include: its tendency to direct attention to consequences rather than causes of social phenomenon, its assumption that causes are inherent in the consequences and its neglect of the subjectively meaningful nature of social life. It is the researcher's contention that, of these two general approaches, the interpretive/interactionist theory is the more relevant to this research. Not only is it in the realm of microsociological rather than macrosociological research, but also such an approach underlines the collective reality behind an individual's behaviours or attitudes and incorporates a developmental perspective. And, although not in the context of transfer in particular or education in general, the concepts offered by such as Glaser and Strauss in their interactionist approach would seem particularly appropriate to the scope of this study.

However, before attempting to clarify a theoretical position in more detail a cautionary note is, perhaps, necessary. The limitations of seeing sociology as one polarised position swallowing up another are pointed out by Karabel and Halsey (1977 p.61) and Davies (1976 p.20). Moreover, such limitations are also, recognised by Glaser and Strauss who, in their interactionist perspective, make allowance for, "the social structural context within which interaction occurs," (1965 p.284) -

and by the more recent writings of Bernstein and Bourdieu (1975 and 1971). Indeed, both Bernstein and Bourdieu have set out to achieve a synthesis between macro and micro levels of analysis.

Initially, the symbolic interactionist perspective seems to offer an appropriate theoretical position. G.H.Mead is frequently cited as the 'founding father' of this perspective. For Mead, "all living organisms are bound up in a general social environment or situation, in a complex of social interrelations and interactions upon which their continued existence depends." (Mead 1934 p.228) - a philosophy which was clearly generated and nurtured by the social and political climate of that time. The stimulus for more recent work in this area, however, has often been the problem, or deviant areas of experience, (e.g. Becker 1971, Goffman 1959, Matza 1969) reflecting the concern Symbolic Interactionists have tended to show to the plight of those low down in organisational and social hierarchies. Symbolic interactionism has three basic postulates. (O.U.P. E202 p.39) First, that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. In this respect Man is seen as inhabiting two different worlds - the natural world in which he is an organism of drives and instincts and where the external world exists independently of him and the social world, where the existence of symbols enables him to give meanings to objects through interpretation:-

"Language.....is simply a process by means of which the individual who is engaged in corporate activity can get the attitude of others involved in the same activity. Through gestures, that is through the part of his act which calls out the response of others, he can arouse in himself the attitude of others. Language as a set of significant symbols is simply the set of gestures which the organism employs in calling out the response of others." (Mead 1934 p.335)

"This attribution of meanings, this interpreting is what makes him distinctively human, and social." (O.U. E202 p.39) The second basic postulate is that this attribution of meaning to objects through symbols is a continuous process:-

"Action is not simply a consequence of psychological attributes such as 'Drives' 'attitudes' or 'personalities', or determined by external social facts, such as social structures or social roles, but results from a continuous process of meaning attribution, which is always emerging, in a state of flux, and subject to change. The individual constructs, modifies, pieces together, weighs up the pros and cons, bargains. Interactionists therefore focus on the process of negotiation, by which meanings are being continually construed."

(Ibid)

The third basic postulate is that this process takes place in a social context. Individual actions are aligned to those of others, by taking on the role of others and by making indications to himself about the others likely response. However, in contrast to the structuralist concept of a patterned set of expectations associated with authority figures, this concept is seen as dynamic, "involving the construction of how others wish or might act in certain circumstances, and how he himself might act." (Ibid) The focus is clearly upon interaction.

Concern in sociological research with the process of

interaction and, in particular, with the way in which people construct social order has led to the development of ethnography (e.g. Cicourel 1964, Garfinkel 1967), an approach which is seen as having a wide application. The term, ethnography, refers to an anthropologist's 'picture' of the way of life of some interacting human group. Therefore, in sociology, "the ethnographer, within the limits of his own perception and ability, aims to give a thorough description of the relationship between all the elements characteristic of a single human group." (O.U. op.cit. p.12) Thus attention is directed "more to micro-level interactions than to larger social structures." (Karabel & Halsey 1977 p.49) Although the limitations imposed by the scope of this study negate the possibility of a thoroughgoing ethnographic approach to this research, ethnography can be seen to have a relevance; a relevance which can be recognised in the concern with three, small interacting groups and their definition of a situation as interpreted through their perceptions of it. Moreover, the emphasis of the research is on description rather than deduction. However, that is not to say that small scale 'anthropological' studies cannot be generalised. Stubbs and Delamont (1976 p.13) point out that arguments to this effect refer only to statistical generalisations. Indeed, as the work of Hughes (1971) indicates, Symbolic Interactionists are particularly concerned with making general statements about the world from detailed qualitative studies, although such generalisations are often more implicit in their work than explicit as primary objectives. And, although the generation of formal theory was not a built in pre-requisite of

the study, according to Glaser and Strauss, such an outcome is, perhaps, heightened by an approach involving the comparative analysis of groups and, possibly, group perceptions:

"When advancing a substantive theory to a formal one, the comparative analysis of groups is still the most powerful method for formulating credible theory. The logic for discovering substantive theory - which provided an efficient guide to multiple groups in one substantive area - also will provide a guide for obtaining more data from many substantive areas in order to generate formal theory and to verify or negate its hypothesis. Again the constant comparison of many groups quickly draws attention to their many similarities and differences, the analysis of which now generates a formal theory." (1968 p.276)

The importance of seeing interaction as a continuous process of meaning attribution which gives rise to action, has already been stressed. (see above page 19) And this is obviously a significant aspect of interaction in relation to a study concerned with perceptions over a period of time. However, in the interactionist paradigm adopted by Glaser and Strauss in their approach to a study of dying, the stress is not only on the ongoing nature of interaction, but also its developmental character. Moreover, in doing this they depart from an essentialist interactionist perspective by suggesting that the social structural context within which interaction occurs is both a dynamic and fluid element.

"On occasion the course of interaction may partly change the social structure within which interaction occurred as when the transformation of an awareness context alters the structural conditions operating at a given hospital service so as to make it a different place. This interacting of social structure and social interaction is precisely what makes the study of interactional development so richly rewarding. Thus binding together the basic concepts of our book and theory." (op.cit. page 284)

The developmental character of Symbolic Interactionism is also seen in the use by interactionists of the concept of career. Indicative of their preference for formal generalisation, "Symbolic Interactionists have applied the notion of a 'career' to a much wider range of activities than those conventionally described in this manner." (Cuff and Payne 1979 p.99) For example, in their work on violence and disorder at football matches, Marsh, Rosser and Harre (1978 p.66) argue the existence of a distinct hierarchical framework of careers amongst the regular football fans. And, as do Glaser and Strauss, they use the concept of status passage in describing the developmental stages through which an individual passes. Goffman in considering the "The moral career of the mental patient in Asylums" (1968) argues that one value of this concept of career is its two sidedness: "One side is linked to internal matters held dearly and closely, such as image of self and felt identity: the other side concerns official position, jural relations and style of life and is part of a publically accessible institutional complex." (p.119), a point which is taken up by Delamont (1976) in an educational context when she argues that classrooms can only be understood when it is accepted that they are situated in time and that, "any individual classroom encounter between a teacher and a class can be conceived as an intersection of pupils' careers and the teacher's career." (p.27) She illustrates the two-sided nature of the concept by reference to two teachers from her study - a Classics teacher of 25 years experience and a

Student Mathematics teacher of five weeks experience:

"We can imagine that both their self images and felt identities and their official positions and style of life are radically different and that understanding these variations is the key towards grasping why their classrooms are so distinct."

(p.27)

A similar framework is, perhaps, seen in Nash's "Classrooms Observed" (1973) which study will be considered in more detail below. The importance of an investigator being aware of such a developmental perspective is stressed by Garfinkel:-

"It frequently happens that in order for the investigator to decide what he is looking at he must wait for future developments, only to find that these futures in turn are influenced by their history and future. By waiting to see what will have happened, he learns what it was he previously saw." (Garfinkel 1969 p.36 - 37)

As their title suggests, the aspect of interaction which provides the central variable for Glaser and Strauss' study is awareness. And in their study of terminal patients in hospital they isolate the following types of awareness context in the relationship between the dying patient and the hospital staff and his relatives:- closed awareness, suspected awareness, mutual pretence and open awareness. Although they recognise that not all interactional research and analysis requires a central focus upon awareness, they do argue that, "such studies irrespective of their specific focus and central variables, include in their analysis a consideration of awareness as a strategic general variable." (Glaser & Strauss, op. cit. p.284) This is, perhaps, an especially worthwhile consideration in this study where the initial intention is to ascertain perceptions of an impending transition.

Both interactionists and ethnomethodologists, see everyday social interaction as a creative activity (Cicourel 1974 p 348), coming together in their concept of this creativity in "the sociological analysis of the process of 'negotiation' over meanings." (Karabel & Halsey 1977 p.58). This concept of 'negotiation' is taken from Strauss's pioneering research in psychiatric hospitals (1964) and it is important to recognise its metaphorical nature. "Strauss is not, by any means, implying that people are all the time engaged in the explicit negotiation of their relative positions; they are not openly making deals or writing out agreements. Sometimes they are, but more usually they are involved in the kind of implicit, unspoken, mutual adjustment of action, feeling, attitude, interest and understanding which Strauss proposes we think of as though it were a process of negotiation and bargaining." (Cuff and Payne 1979 p.110). Delamont saw this concept as being basic to the framework of her study of secondary school classroom life (1976 p.26). However, in contemplating particularly the interaction between teacher and pupil in the Primary School it could be argued that, although an element of creativity is doubtless present, "there are also limits to the extent to which a definition of the situation may be negotiated." (Karabel & Halsey 1977 p.58). Moreover, this is perhaps, not only true in relation to pupil - teacher interaction but also parent - teacher interaction, the reason being that, "teachers by virtue of their powerful institutional positions, wield sanctions that not only delimit the boundaries of what may be 'negotiated' but also give them

a crucial advantage in determining whose definitions will prevail." (Ibid) Such arguments, of course, represent a departure from a thoroughgoing interactionist viewpoint and a recognition, not only of the structural context of interaction, but also the notion of, 'symbolic power' (Bourdieu in Gleeson 1977). That the former can be reconciled with an interactionist paradigm has already been seen in relation to the work of Glaser and Strauss. The recognition of the latter can, perhaps, be argued as a necessity to face reality, a reality based on the historical growth of education and the distribution of its resources. The notion of symbolic power arises out of the conflict theories of sociology. A basic conflict in education can be seen in the fact that, while liberal education preaches a philosophy of the curriculum based upon needs and interest, school itself is a compulsory and restrictive institution. Parents and teachers, it can be argued, are in conflict over the resources they have in hand, a conflict in which the teachers undoubtedly hold the upper hand by virtue of the accessibility to them of such information as that provided by standardised tests. And this is, perhaps, a particularly valid and important perspective to have in mind when approaching a consideration of perceptions towards a potentially critical area like transition.

In summary, the theory which underpins this study is based largely, though not exclusively, within the interactionist perspective. Although the emphasis has been placed upon the interaction of individuals as a dynamic and creative

force, a recognition of the role the structural context might play - especially in a situation involving young children - has been made. Similarly, while the possible contribution of ethnography has been assessed, there has also been an acknowledgement that the notion of symbolic power could have a bearing upon the situation. Finally, an acceptance has been made of Glaser and Strauss' plea for the consideration of awareness as a strategic general variable, and a recognition of the significance of the concept of "career" in the interactionist perspective. Having thus defined the theoretical standpoint from which it is intended to approach the collection of research data, we now turn to the consideration of what would be an appropriate methodological framework for such a theoretical position.

In general, classroom research traditionally has fallen within the psychometric paradigm in which, "the data of interaction, whether this be teacher talk, gesture or movement, or more rarely, pupil talk, gesture or movement, are taken as fundamentally non-problematical and open to measurement by existing instruments," (Robinson in Eggleston 1974 p.252). The concern of such classroom based research into perceptions is, however, generally with the effect of teachers' perceptions of the classroom (Silberman 1969) - rather than with their respective perceptions of a process such as transfer. Nash (1976 p.19) argues the only methodologically correct way of investigating perceptions is by listening and Robinson points out how the codification of information into categories, "results in closure rather than

openness to the field." (Robinson op.cit. p.253) This leads directly onto the role of the researcher in a study, whether he be an interviewer or observer. Robinson feels, "The research act needs to be seen as a system of negotiation between the researcher and the subject." (Ibid) and the emphasis in the ethnographic approach to research which he favours is upon participant observation, "which in practice tends to be a combination of methods, or rather a 'style' of research in which the chief instrument is the researcher himself." (Ibid) Such approaches can, perhaps, be seen in Glaser and Strauss for whom, "A sociologist contributes most when he reports what he has observed in such a fashion that his account rings true to insiders, but also in such a fashion that they themselves would not have written it." (1965 p.8-9).

Our concern with perceptions rather than performance and the observations made in the preceeding discussion and the need to be sensitive to the meanings that members hold in order to understand the process of transfer comprehensively, suggest that the general strategy appropriate to the above defined theory is that promulgated by Parlett and Hamilton (1972). Primarily concerned with description and interpretation, Parlett and Hamilton's approach, "Illuminative Evaluation" is clearly microsociological for they see its main role in the "close up study of the learning milieu" (p 11). Its aim is to be both adaptable and eclectic - sensitive to the many factors which influence a piece of research: -

"The size, aims and techniques of the evaluation depend upon many factors: the sponsors' preoccupations; the exact nature and stage of the innovation; the number of institutions, teachers and students involved; the level of co-operation and the degree of access to relevant information; the extent of the investigator's previous experience; the time available for data collection; the format of the required report and, not least, the size of the evaluation budget." (1972, p.6)

Finally, Parlett and Hamilton see the application of illuminative evaluation in the context of the 'innovatory program' in the school situation. And its application to this research is validated by the concern of the researcher to look anew at an, albeit, traditional program, the infant-junior transfer situation as handled in one particular school.

The methodological framework put forward by Parlett and Hamilton is a threefold approach, encompassing observation, further inquiry and interpretation. The significance of this period of observation in relation to this study will be the need to discover what kinds of perceptions are to be explored. And, in this context, Parlett and Hamilton point to the value of 'on the spot' discussions and interviews - which might provide material not gained in more formal interviews. In this sense the researcher's 'participant' involvement in the school would clearly meet the demands of this aspect of the methodology. Arising from this background of 'inside' knowledge will come the post-transfer enquiry into the perceptions of the respective groups and the evidence presented above suggests the best way to gain these is by listening during the course of partially structured interviews. However, although it will be possible to sample the perceptions of pupils and teachers by interview

techniques, the necessity of gaining sufficient information in a short space of time will make the use of a questionnaire expedient in the sampling of some of the parental perceptions. This will enable the sample of parents approached to be widened but, having regard to the problems of questionnaire formulation and the question of bias, such questionnaires that are used will need to be carefully prepared and of an 'open' nature. The concern with the study to examine perceptions across the infant/junior interface will require that these two stages are repeated at a suitable time after the transfer has taken place, so that the perceptions of the three groups following the transfer are recorded. The third and final stage of the research will be to attempt a documentation, description and, perhaps, interpretation of the information gathered.

Transfer has become part of the contemporary educational process as a result of the development of successive stages in education and the growth in the size of schools. It is the researcher's contention that change and movement are integral constituents of the school process and that transfer is simply an aspect of this total process. The significance of transfer lies, perhaps, in the opportunity it presents for the individual pupils involved to make predictions, comparisons and assessments of different aspects of the normal school process by virtue of accumulated experience. In this sense the transition from infant to junior status in or between primary schools would seem to be particularly interesting in view of the age

of the pupils, the limitations of their experience in school and, perhaps, the traditional dichotomy which has often been a feature of the approaches adopted in these two aspects of English Education. And yet, as the preceding survey of literature has demonstrated, there is little or no evidence of research into this particular transfer. As we have seen, the transfer from junior to secondary education and more recently, to and from middle schools has dominated research in this area. However, despite not being concerned directly with our particular age of transfer, this research has demonstrated some of the substantive data associated with transfer in general and, in particular, has highlighted the different theoretical approaches adopted by researchers. A consideration of these approaches in relation to the scope and aims of this study has led to the belief that a theoretical approach based upon the Symbolic Interactionist perspective would be most appropriate and that the work of Glaser and Strauss has proved especially helpful in this respect. In particular, it is felt their two organising concepts of "career" and "awareness" may prove especially helpful in illuminating the process of transfer. In the definition of a suitable strategy for the collection of research data the methodology of "Illuminative Evaluation" promulgated by Parlett and Hamilton, has been adopted. However, the recognition of the significance of the social structural context of interaction demands that, before turning to the application of this methodology, we consider the school setting of the research for it is accepted that the school as an institution powerfully affects pupils'/teachers' definition of the situation.

SCHOOL SETTING OF THE RESEARCH

SCHOOL SETTING OF THE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

This section sets out to examine the setting of the research in terms of the school generally - its catchment area, internal layout, organisation and staffing and, in particular, those classrooms, areas and teachers associated with the infant-junior interface. The significance of the "school setting" to research, particularly when approached from a social anthropological standpoint, is well documented. (Mays 1962, Richardson 1967, Galloway 1968, Dunkin and Biddle 1974, Hamilton 1974 and Rintoul and Thorne 1975). Eggleston (1976) distinguishes between the 'ecology' of the school and the 'micro-ecology' of the classroom in this context. The source of such information derives largely from the researcher's opportunity for participant observation within the school as a teacher over a period of some nine years. The value of participant observation as a means of data collection in sociologically based research has been demonstrated, amongst others, by Smith and Geoffrey (1968) and Lacey (1970) while the concept and role of the participant observer, together with the ethics involved are discussed in the Open University Publication, 'The Ethnography of the School' (Woods 1977). Moreover, the researcher's transfer to another school shortly before the commencement of data collection perhaps helped to fulfil Glaser

and Strauss' (1965 p.89) condition that sociological reports should be, "recognised as sufficiently inside that they only reveal what is already known." Certainly, the fact that the researcher no longer had a professional attachment to the school enabled him to take a far more detached and, hopefully, more objective stance.

FAIRTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fairtree Primary School opened in temporary accommodation in 1967 with 5 pupils on roll. By the time the present building was occupied, some 16 months later, the number on roll had grown to 104. From 1968 onwards, the school steadily grew, reaching a maximum of 334 pupils in 1978 and, at the time the research was conducted, the number on roll was 315. More recently, however, the school has suffered the problem of falling rolls and numbers have fallen below the 300 mark with consequent reductions in the number of teaching staff.

Before local government re-organisation in 1974, the school was part of the Deeside Division of the Cheshire Education Offices in Hoylake, and centrally from County Hall, Chester. Under the system operated in Cheshire, transfer to secondary education was by selection, based largely upon the results of verbal reasoning tests administered at 9 plus and 10 plus. The First School Test was taken in June when the pupils were in the second year junior age group and the Second

School Test was taken in the October of the pupils' final year at Primary school. Dependent upon the results of the selection procedure, pupils keeping within the state system transferred, either: to single-sex grammar schools in West Kirby, or single-sex secondary schools in Pensby. The re-organisation of county boundaries in 1976 resulted in the amalgamation of the two Cheshire divisions, Deeside and Bebington, with the former Birkenhead and Wallasey authorities to create a new "Wirral" Education Authority. However, despite the existence of three-tier comprehensive systems in the former Wallasey and Birkenhead areas, albeit with differing age ranges, the two-tier selective system has been maintained in Deeside and Bebington. Moreover, the method of selection has changed little apart from the gradual concentration of the testing procedure into the final year of primary education, with the administration of tests in the October and February of that year.

Architecturally, the school building was conceived as being "semi-open plan" in its design.* A conception which derived largely from the incorporation of shared work bay accommodation in the infant and lower junior classroom areas and one administrative area - each being served by a short corridor. The infant area originally comprised three classrooms, work bay, open quadrangle, cloakrooms and toilets and the lower and upper junior areas respectively two classrooms, cloakroom and toilets. The administrative area includes

* See Appendix 7 for site and building plans

an entrance hall, head teacher's room, office, staff-room, staff toilets, caretakers room and boiler room. The school kitchen is situated at the west end of the hall being isolated by large sliding doors. Access to and from the separate teaching and administrative areas can only be gained either, by crossing the hall, or via the outside of the school. The rapid growth of the school population during the 1970's led to the lower junior workbay being converted into a classroom area in 1971/72, the erection of two mobile classrooms in 1974/75 on the grassed area on the north side of the playground and, most recently, the use of the infant work bay as a classroom. The school grounds consist of a single large playground, games field and staff car park, together with a large grassed frontal area separating the building from the main road.

In terms of furniture and resources the school reflects, not only the high standard to which Cheshire equipped and furnished new schools at the time it was built, but also the fact that the school has, for many years, enjoyed an annual income of over £1,000 from its P.T.A. The school would appear to have few shortcomings in terms of furniture; classroom equipment; audio visual aids and reprographic capabilities. The reception classroom is fully carpeted, the hall has stage lighting facilities and much utilised items of equipment such as radio cassette recorders and televisions are duplicated.

In addition, the school has a large reference library situated in the Entrance Hall area. The accommodation of the seven classrooms in the main building is well appointed in terms of size, storage space display and work tops and sinks. The work bay classrooms and demountables, however, are less favourably endowed, the former by virtue of their lack of floor space cupboard space and water facilities and the latter because of their lack of running water, fitted cupboards and the greater noise their raised wooden floor generates with movement about the classroom. Although the two demountable classrooms have a shared cloakroom area, they have no toilet facilities and pupils have to cross to the main building in this respect.

The internal organisation of the school was, at the time of the research, structured into separate infant and junior sections each with its own "Head of Department".* The infant 'department'* consisted of five classes, a reception class of 25 pupils, two classes of middle infants with 28 and 17 pupils respectively and two classes of third year infants with 28 and 16 pupils respectively. Both of the smaller classes were taught in former work bay areas - one alongside the three infant classroom and one in the lower junior area of the school. The head of the infant department held a Scale 3 post, had taught at the school since 1968 and was due to retire in July 1979. Two

* This was the term used in the school
See Appendix 2 Letter 2

other members of the department held scale 2 posts and had always taught in the recognised infant classrooms and all three lived within the school catchment area (as did one other junior teacher and the headteacher). The two workbay classrooms occupied by the smaller parallel classes of 2nd and 3rd year infants were taught by young teachers, one in her probationary year and one who had completed her probationary training at the school in 1977. (It is, perhaps, noteworthy that, since its inception, the classroom occupying the junior workbay area had only ever been occupied by teachers newly appointed to the school, most of whom were either in their probationary year or their second year of teaching.)

Apart from assembly on a Friday mornings, playtimes and a few special occasions there was little structured contact between the infant and junior pupils. With the exception of a small number of first year juniors, the infants had first sitting in the hall for dinner and finished school at 3.15 p.m. half an hour earlier than the juniors. However, all the infant classes frequently joined together for activities such as hymn practice, assembly and television programmes and two classes often joined together under one teacher for music lessons or stories. The only formal timetable arrangements which governed the infant classes in relation to the school were those involving the use of the hall for television, P.E., music and movement, assembly and hymn practice.

The junior classes were organised into two bands of parallel 1st and 2nd year juniors and 3rd and 4th year juniors. This organisation had come about as a result of the growth of

the school to a one and half form entry size. The gradual increase in numbers had led to a different organisation of junior classes each year for a number of years. In particular, the junior staff had become increasingly dissatisfied with the inequalities this led to for both pupils and teachers. Thus, while some members of a year group would be grouped together in a single age-grouped class, other members of that year group would be vertically-grouped with another older or younger age group. By proposing a two band vertically-grouped organisation to commence in September 1977 the junior staff felt their department would be able to offer equality of opportunity for their pupils, a stable pattern of class organisation for a number of years and the assimilation of new junior pupils into the school without any subsequent overcrowding in one particular class. In addition, it was felt that such an organisation could lead to a fairer sharing of resources and an increase in curriculum co-ordination and continuity within the junior department. The only aspect of this proposed organisation which evoked dissension was the question of whether the pupils should remain with a teacher for two years or move within a band to another teacher. The majority of the staff, however, favoured a situation in which the pupils changed teachers after a year. In agreeing to try out such an organisation the Headteacher, in discussion with the junior staff, gave the Deputy Headteacher the responsibility for the upper band and overall co-ordination of both bands and suggested the appointment of the longest serving junior teacher as the co-ordinator for the lower junior band.

At the outset of the research the upper junior band consisted of two classes of thirty five and one of thirty six 9 - 11 year olds and the three male teachers, the Deputy Head and two with scale 2 posts for games and music respectively. The lower junior band had two classes of thirty two and one class of thirty one, 7 -9 year olds and three female teachers. Two of the teachers had been appointed to the school in 1975 and had completed training in 1974 and 1975 respectively and one had joined the school in 1978 having completed her training in 1955. Both of the younger teachers held scale 2 posts - one for games and Lower Junior Co-ordination and one for P.E. and Drama.

Formal timetabling for the junior classes involved not only P.E., assemblies and Television (which the demountable classes had to have in the hall as did the workbay classes) but also games. And, in endeavouring to keep games lessons to year groups, this involved some interchange of teachers, owing to the need to provide female teachers for 3rd and 4th year girls' games and male teachers for 1st and 2nd year boys' games. Affecting the lower juniors only, was the headmaster's programme of weekly spelling and table tests which he administered at some time during the day on a Friday.

The organisational separation of the school into infant and junior "departments" was, perhaps, reinforced by both curriculum and social factors. In terms of curriculum the only really developed link between the departments was the continuation of the reading scheme into the lower junior age group.

This was the only area where any depth of continuity existed. Certainly in the area of Mathematics there was little overlap, with the infants utilising the Fletcher Scheme and the juniors a scheme combining Alpha/Beta, Modern Comprehensive Arithmetic and 6 to 10 a day, none of which was used by the infant teachers. Socially, the most significant factor was the three senior infant teachers' practice of going home or shopping each lunch hour, a practice which was facilitated by their nearness to home but which meant that they only had a limited time in informal discussion with other members of staff and especially the junior staff. Formal discussion took place once a month at a full staff meeting which lasted from 12.50 p.m. to 1.25 pm. - the commencement of afternoon school. However, this involved little discussion upon curriculum matters. Departmental discussions regarding policy, co-ordination, curriculum or the planning of special occasions generally took place informally or while the headteacher took the pupils of that department for assembly. The only seasonal special occasion which involved both the infant and junior pupils was the Harvest Festival. Internal communication in the school was achieved by the circulation of 'Staff Communication Forms' or the 'Bulletin Folder' both of which required individual teachers' initials as an indication it had been seen. In this way it was hoped to avoid the danger of staff being neglected in the transmission of information.

At the outset of the research the pupils involved were in two parallel classes of third year infants. However, the situations of the pupils in each class were vastly different, for,

while 29 were based in a large and well equipped purpose built classroom, the remaining 16 occupied a makeshift classroom in a narrow workbay area. Moreover, while the former class were taught by a senior teacher of some twenty years teaching experience who had taught at the school for twelve years, the latter were taught by a teacher with three years' experience, all of which had been at the school.

The larger classroom was one of the three infant classrooms occupying the infant 'area' of the school. It was unique in that it contained within it both cloakroom facilities for all of the class and a girls' toilet. One advantage of this, according to the teacher, was the security it gave the pupils in their knowledge that any belongings they had 'lost' would most probably be somewhere in their own room. As with the other purpose-built classrooms in the original buildings, the room was well equipped with storage cupboards and worktops, sink, bookshelves and one whole wall with a linoleum blackboard finish. Unlike the other classrooms, however, it had little display space having a large window area on both sides of its length because of its adjacency to the open quadrangle. Access to both the playground and hall was easily gained via short corridors, although the corridor to the hall housed a small middle infant class in the workbay area. Within the classroom the pupils were seated in groups of between four and six pupils - the only provisions being made in the composition and arrangement of the groups were that each table should include both boys and girls and that each child should be able to see the blackboard. The lack of any formal setting or grouping was explained by the teacher as being because of the advantages to be

obtained by a mixing of abilities in terms of language development. The teacher, described as Teacher A in the sampling of perceptions data, defined her approach in the classroom as one which stressed the development of individual abilities. Subject areas were adhered to initially in the daily programme but gradually with the development of individual programmes overlapping of subject areas invariably took place. Above all, a stress was placed upon the completion of the work that was set for the individual child. The main resources utilised in the basic subject areas were the "Janet and John" Reading Scheme and the "Mathematics for Schools" programme by Harold Fletcher. The latter work was pursued as a formal class lesson rather than with pupils working on different levels and books. Apparatus was freely available within the class but there was no set apparatus structured throughout the infant department. One afternoon each week the children were allowed the freedom of choice in an "Activities" session which involved the use of constructional and other play material. The main value of this the teacher saw again in terms of language development. The proximity of three of the other infant classes meant that, in addition to timetabled grouping of classes for assembly, hymn practice and television, informal groupings could take place for story or music lessons (all three of the senior infant teachers were competent pianists.)

While the larger Infant 3 classroom had only one door for both entering and leaving the classroom, the smaller workbay classroom was adjacent to two sets of double doors and two single doors a situation which indicates some of the difficulties

encountered in working in that area. In addition, the classroom was, of course, cut off from the three other infant classrooms and housed in a junior area of the school. Sited within the corridor from the hall to what were originally designed as the two lower junior classrooms, the classroom was now adjacent to the quadrangle a lower junior classroom, an upper junior classroom, the hall and a corridor acting as a cloakroom and leading to toilets and the yard. Thus the problems experienced by the teacher included those of a small classroom with limited storage and display space, and the movement of people through the classroom making their way to the hall, cloakroom and toilets or playground. Admittedly, there had been some serious attempts to alleviate the difficulties of being situated astride a main thoroughfare of the school. Double doors had been built at the T junction of the two corridors and a new entrance had been opened to the classroom occupied by the upper junior age groups. Moreover, pupils from the demountable classrooms entered the hall in the upper junior corridor despite the distance involved. However, pupils from the adjacent lower junior classroom still had to pass through to reach the cloakroom, toilets, yard and hall and there was still a tendency, especially on wet days, for a good deal of informal movement through the area by teachers, visitors and pupils. The narrowness of the classroom allowed space for only one table across the width so the classroom comprised three tables one behind the other down the classroom's length. Portable storage units provided the tray and cupboard space some of which had peg board backings, providing both display space and a measure of privacy

between the lower junior classroom and the cloakroom corridor. Movement within the classroom was naturally very limited and floor space for pupils' activities was virtually nil. However, the comparative intimacy of the situation, together with the small numbers of pupils involved made a good deal of verbal interchange possible between the teacher and the pupils generally and provided ample opportunity for generous pupil-teacher contact. In addition to the difficulties associated with the classroom itself, the teacher in the area also had to contend with the isolation its situation gave rise to in relation to the other infant classes; an isolation which was, perhaps, made more difficult by the fact that the teachers occupying this area were invariably those with a limited experience of the school and teaching generally. The teacher in this area, Teacher B, adopted an approach which consisted largely of fairly formal work in the mornings and informal activities during the afternoons. Such a division of time she argued, was necessary because of the limitations imposed by the size of her classroom. There was simply no space for play activities to run concurrently with other work. In general Teacher B limited the time spent of any one activity for half an hour because of the inability of the children to concentrate satisfactorily for any longer period. Conversation work was felt to be an important preliminary to most work and, whenever the children had been involved in a hall activity such as F.E. or television, informal work was pursued immediately afterwards to give them time to re-settle. Afternoon activities and the afternoon were generally rounded off with a story.

The three lower junior classrooms to which the infant 3 pupils were to transfer consisted of the two demountables sited at the north end of the playground and a classroom adjacent to the infant class in the lower junior workbay area. The obvious physical drawbacks to the demountable classrooms in terms of noise level and lack of running water have already been mentioned. In addition, the pupils had to walk the length of the school building to the upper junior corridor whenever they had to use the hall and an even greater distance when they wished to use the reference library. The demountables shared a common cloakroom area which was often used by groups of pupils engaged in painting or play activities. Within the classroom the whole of the rear wall was given over to display space and the two side walls had windows extending their full length and half way down their height. Each room had its own stockroom as well as tray and cupboard space. The main building classroom was furnished and fitted to the high standard of all the main building classrooms with full length and height wall cupboards, blackboard and display area and a fourth side with half windows half fitted cupboards with work tops. Its drawback was, of course, the fact that the pupils had to pass through the adjacent infant classroom on their way to any other part of the school building or grounds. During the course of the research the staffing of the lower junior classes underwent some change. At the end of the Spring Term the co-ordinator of the lower band having moved away from the area, had been replaced by a new member of staff who lived within the catchment area, had a child in the reception class and was returning to teaching

after having had a family. However, at the beginning of the Autumn Term she transferred to an infant workbay class and her place was taken by a male teacher from the upper band. The reason for this appeared to be the fact that the male teacher involved had obtained a post in another school commencing at Christmas and, as another male teacher had already been appointed, the headteacher had decided to put the new teacher into the upper band, most probably to avoid disrupting the older pupils who were involved in the selection procedure. Moreover, the researcher was aware of the probability of this change during the Summer Term when the pre-transfer perceptions were being sampled. The researcher himself moved school after the half-term break during the summer term prior to the transfer of the pupils to the junior department. His place was taken by a supply teacher for the remainder of that term. Thus the three junior teachers to whom the pupils transferred were : - Teacher C appointed in 1975 after one year's teaching in the Midlands and the holder of a scale 2 post; teacher D appointed in 1976 when she returned to full time teaching and who lived in the catchment area and had three children all of whom had attended the school and Teacher E who had been appointed to the school as a probationer in 1976, had previously taught third and fourth year pupils and who held a scale 2 post for music.

The teaching methods adopted in the lower junior band were, to a great extent, directed by the vertically-grouped nature of the classes. In each class the basic subject areas of Mathematics and English Language were largely dealt with in terms of the two respective year groups, utilising the text

books which were common to all the junior classes. Within this general year group framework allowances would be made for individual pupils who, by virtue of their lower or greater ability, required extra attention, extra work or alternative source books. In other areas, such as Topic Work and Creative Writing, a general class approach would be adopted initially, with individual pupils responding in the application of the work required in relation to their individual ability and capacity for work. Other areas such as Music, Art and craft and P.E. were taught on a class basis while the weekly Games lesson involved only the year groups who were combined together from the three classes. Perhaps the greatest difficulty facing the lower junior teachers was the fact that, in the basic subjects and especially Mathematics, they were required to introduce the pupils to source material which had not been anticipated in the infant department. For example, the 1st year junior pupils were largely required to work from the 7-a-day mental book without the experience of having worked through 4, 5 or 6-a-day. Similarly, while the pupils had worked from the Fletcher Scheme in the infants they were required in the juniors to work from the Alpha/Beta and Modern Comprehensive Arithmetic schemes. Within this general approach combining class, group and individual teaching methods there were obviously differences in application between the three teachers. In particular, teacher C favoured an approach which was somewhat reminiscent of the infant department in that play activities formed an integral part of the daily timetable. Teacher C in fact had had some experience within the infant department at the school.

Finally, all three teachers included homework in their teaching programme either in terms of set reading or exercises to complete in Mathematics or English Books.

In terms of catchment area, the school is situated in one of the most sought after housing areas on the Wirral. House prices in the area are accordingly inflated in relation to similar housing units in other areas. Most of the housing in the area is of a detached nature built since 1960. As might be expected in such an expensive environment parental occupations were generally of a highly paid nature with the majority being in professional, managerial or self-employed situations.* Most of the families enjoy the convenience of having more than one car. It is not surprising, in the context of such a background, that the headteacher is able to insist upon a rigid and detailed adherence to school uniform including top coats and is supported in this by the majority of parents. The uniform is only obtainable through recognised suppliers.

Parental contact with the school commenced with a meeting with the headteacher on the morning of their child's entry into the Reception Class. Thereafter, the parents were invited to Open Evenings in the Autumn and Summer Term. Written reports were given at the Summer Term meeting to parents of junior pupils. All other reports were verbal. In addition, parents were able to contact the headteacher or teachers during a school year if they were concerned about any aspect of their

* Appendix 1 (Fairtree Primary School, Parental Occupations According to :- Hall Jones Scale of occupational prestige.)

child's schooling. Communications to parents took the form of letters from the headteacher, although these very rarely concerned matters of school organisation or curriculum.*

Informal parental involvement in the school took a number of different forms. A rota of parents manned the school reference library each afternoon. Parents helped with school visits and in the catering arrangements for Christmas parties. A parent helped with Art and Craft groups and individual and groups of parents helped in the production of plays by working with pupils in the making of costumes and scenery. Formal parental involvement took place under the aegis of the Parent-Teacher Organisation and the the annual election of two Parent Governors to the school. The Parent-Teacher Organisation was concerned largely with the raising of money for the school. The officers of the committee including the chairman were all parents and although theoretically all of the teachers were included in the composition of the committee, in practice only the headteacher and one or two staff representatives attended the committee meetings. The main fund raising activities during the year were a Jumble Sale, a Summer Fayre and Christmas Dance but other meetings did take place. Only very rarely had there been a meeting of an educational nature. Indeed the researcher could only recall three having taken place during his nine years at the school namely: a talk on Mathematics by the Headteacher, a Liverpool Headteacher talking about his comprehensive school and two speakers from Christ's College leading a forum on the subject of Moral Education. In its main aim of fund raising the organisation was extremely successful with annual amounts totalling well over £1,000.

* See Appendix 2

THE SCHOOL SETTING OF THE RESEARCH

Discussion

In addition to providing a source of background information essential to an understanding of the three groups' perceptions of the transfer, a consideration of the school setting also raises the question of what expectations it generates for the researcher in relation to the content of such perceptions. For example, it might be expected that the pre-transfer perceptions of the pupils between the two infant classes will vary because of the differences in the proximity of their classrooms to other junior classes and the different approaches adopted by their respective teachers, particularly in response to their class and classroom sizes. The effect of the transfer to three vertically-grouped junior class raises the question of the possible separation of friendship groups and of how significant this will be in the pupils' perceptions. In the same context one wonders how the newly transferred pupils will react to the presence of older juniors in the same class? Will they be seen as an advantage in the settling into the new situation or as a disadvantage in that their presence detracts from their new status as juniors because their position as "only first year juniors" is underlined? The division of the pupils between three junior teachers poses the question of the extent to which pupils' post transfer perceptions will be influenced by the respective attitudes, approaches and sex of the junior teachers. In relation to the teachers' perceptions, while it is, perhaps, to be expected that there could be differences between the perceptions of junior teachers and infant teachers generally, might there also be

significant differences between the perceptions of teachers within the same department because of differences in their age, experience and personality? Finally, because of the situation of the school in an area of selective education with assessment for selection based largely on a formal testing procedure in the final year of the junior school, the researcher would expect the transfer from infant to junior education to be seen by parents as a most significant stage in their children's education. In a sense it might well be expected that they would see this as the commencement of the preparation for the selection procedure. A grammar school education for their children was high on the expectations of the majority of parents encountered by the researcher during his teaching experience at the school.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

PRESENTATION OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

This extended section will explore the perceptions pupils, teachers and parents have of the transfer between the infant and junior stages of education within Fairtree Primary School. Because the research was limited to a case study of one particular school, a decision was made at the outset by the researcher to attempt the widest possible sample of perceptions. This resulted in the necessity to employ the use of a questionnaire in the sampling of most parental perceptions, and group interviews in the sampling of most pupils' perceptions. Although such a varied approach is far from ideal, it does provide an opportunity to ascertain whether different approaches produce similar or dissimilar findings. In this documentation of data the before-transfer perceptions of each group will be presented first, summarised and then immediately followed by the post-transfer perceptions. Such a strategy it is hoped will facilitate the comparison of each group's pre and post-transfer perceptions. Where group interviews or questionnaire techniques have been used in addition to individual interviews the group data will be presented before the individual data. Following the presentation of data, an attempt will be made to analyse the similarities and differences between the perceptual data of the three groups, particularly in relation to the previously delineated interactionist concepts of 'awareness' and 'career'. And, finally, the section will end with a consideration of how the results obtained in this study relate to the results obtained in previous work.

PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Of the forty five pupils involved in the infant junior transfer the perceptions of six pupils were sampled by individual, taped interviews during their school day. Three boys and three girls were chosen at random by the use of register numbers in the ratio of 2 : 3 from the larger class and 1 : 3 from the smaller class, a ratio which accorded with the relative proportions of the year group in those two classes. The remaining pupils were interviewed in groups of approximately six pupils - the taped interviews again taking place upon the school premises. Group members all belonged to the same class in the initial pre-transfer interviews. The use of interview techniques not only accords with the recommendations of Parlett and Hamilton but also the researcher's experience in a pilot study undertaken at the school one year earlier.* In this pilot study an attempt was made to sample first year junior pupils' post-transfer perceptions by asking them to write their impressions of junior school life. The results obtained underlined the impracticability of written sampling amongst such young children. Even so the use of interview techniques was not without problems. Particularly at the infant stage there was the danger that the interview questions themselves would generate or increase anxiety about the impending transfer. There was also the possibility that, in trying to encourage responses from the children, the researcher could direct and influence their thought processes. Both of these dangers had to be kept uppermost in the researcher's mind whilst conducting the interviews. The pre-transfer

*See Appendix 3

interviews were conducted in late June during the pupils' final half term in the third year infant class, while the post-transfer interviews were conducted during the month of November at the beginning of the pupils' second half term in the first year junior class. Examples of the basic structure of both sets of interviews in relation to the topics covered are included in Appendix 4. Both the information the researcher gained from his appraisal of the school setting of the research, and some of the written responses gained in the pilot study* provided stimuli for the choice of topics included in the interviews.

* See Appendix 3.

PUPILS PERCEPTIONS BEFORE TRANSFER *

a. GROUP INTERVIEWS

Overwhelmingly, the interpretation placed upon the impending transfer by the groups was that of a rise in their status. In no sense did they envisage the passage from "top infant" to "lower juniors" as constituting a lessening of status or privilege. Certain aspects of infant life would be missed but these would be more than compensated by the superior status gained. By far the most significant omission would be 'Activities' - for the majority of pupils felt that juniors did not do "Activities" : -

"because they're too big,"

or

"because you have to do more work,"

reflecting again the concern with status. Second to "Activities," morning milk was the item most likely to be missed and this was closely followed by the "infant teachers" either individually or collectively, and the earlier 3.25 p.m. dismissal. Surprisingly few children felt they would greatly miss their friends, if separated, even when this possibility was put to them directly. Either the pupils felt that, because they had a lot of friends, they would bound to be with at least one, or that they would be able to make new friends quite easily in their new class. Other observations made by individual group members regarding things to be missed included : -

"Having our own cloakroom"

"First sitting for dinners because you have to wait longer and get hungry."

"Fletcher Maths,"

* See Appendix 4

The practical advantages of junior school life, as foreseen by the groups, were very much bound up with the rewards and importance of being older and bigger. The boys' response in particular could perhaps be summed up by one pupil's observation : -

"You'll have bigger dinners and football!"

Obviously, the advent of games on the field was an important status symbol to most boys, but even more important than that to both girls and boys was the fact that,

"You get two plays at dinner!"

This was the result of being on second sitting and the response might well have been due, as much to the tiredness and frustration the infant children felt with their hour long continuous play after first sitting, as to the prospect of, hypothetically in terms of their stage of understanding of time, more playtime. The longer day was seen as an advantage by a number of pupils as was the prospect of being in a demountable classroom. Further enquiry revealed the superior status of the demountable classrooms arose chiefly because they had steps and were separate from the rest of the school! The only other advantages of junior school life mentioned were, "more work," "homework" and "making things" and each of these was only mentioned by one or two pupils.

The implications of a rise in status underpinned the children's perceptions of what work would be like in the juniors. This was the only question which was met by a chorused response in any of the groups. There was total accord that

the work would be, "harder" or "higher" in the juniors: -

"You go on higher things."

"You have to do homework in the juniors. Work will be harder and you will have harder books."

The reason for this harder work would be the fact that they were older, age naturally being very much a status symbol with younger children.

"It might be harder work and as you get older you want to know more."

"It will be harder work because you're getting older and using different books."

Although there was unanimity about the higher level of the work to be experienced in the juniors, there was very little knowledge of the nature of this harder work or the books that would be utilised. As one boy pointed out: -

"There's a rectangular yellow book I've seen in Mr ---'s class."

'Sums' seemed to be the curriculum area of greatest expectations with regard to difficulty and one or two individuals were able to name 8-a-day (a second year junior book) and Alpha. One girl anticipated the hardest work would be, "the twelve times table," while one of the groups developed the kind of 'sums' that would be tackled in the following way: -

Pupil 1 : "Hundreds, tens and units"

Pupil 2 : "Thousands, tens and units!"

Pupil 3 : "Millions, tens and units!"

In addition a number of pupils mentioned the prospect of doing homework - "writing and sums" and of learning "double writing." Surprisingly few pupils mentioned "Mainline English" although Book 1 had recently been introduced for some pupils in the infant school as a preparation for junior work on that scheme.

The one aspect of their forthcoming junior school work with which all pupils seemed conversant was the weekly spelling and table test with the Headteacher. This was the one area that most pupils were anxious to discuss of their own volition. An example of this is seen in the following extract from one group interview when a discussion about Friday assembly was terminated in mid-flow by the comment : -

Boy 1 : "I'm scared about having the test!"

Chorus of "yes"

Girl: "My 2 x table - I know it already very well."

Researcher: "You tell me about these tests because you said it first. What are these tests?"

Boy 1: "Well its ... well I can't remember."

Researcher: "Can anybody tell us about the test?"

Girl: "Well you do spellings and you do tables and Mr. --- does it with you."

Researcher: "And why are you scared?"

Boy 2: "Because Mr. --- does it with us."

Laughter

Researcher: "And why are you scared of Mr --- ?"

Boy 2: "In case you get it wrong"

Researcher: "Well what would he do if you got something wrong?"

Boy 2: "He might be angry with us."

Boy 1: "If you get about 16 he gets quite angry with you, but the highest point is 20 and that's a house point."

Not all of the pupils could name all of the junior teachers to whom they might transfer. However, although there was no explicit favourite junior teacher, one teacher, Miss C, stood out consistently as being mentioned first when the pupils were

asked to list those teachers into whose class they might go. Rather than in terms of a particular teacher, preferences for a particular junior class were generally expressed in terms of a particular pupil as the following answers to the question, "Which junior teacher would you like to be with?" indicate.

"Miss C, because my friend might go in that one because she has a sister in Miss C's class."

"Mrs E, because my brother is in her class."

By far the majority of pupils saw the possibility of being taught by a male teacher as no problem and most said they would look forward to it.

Apart from their own observations, the reference point most utilised and respected by the pupils as their main source of information regarding junior school life was that of older pupils and especially older brothers and sisters and their friends.

"I would like 8-a-day, my sister does it"

"My friends in the juniors say it's good being a junior"

"I've been shown how to do the spelling tests by Sarah."

However, this did not work for everybody:

"My sister hasn't told me about the juniors, she's too lazy."

Nor did it mean that the opinions of others were automatically accepted on face value:

"I know I'll get homework because my brother does. He doesn't like it, but I will."

Researcher: "Have you talked to any juniors about school?"

Pupil: "Yes, they think it's horrible."

Researcher: "Are you looking forward to going in the juniors then?"

Pupil: "Yes!"

That the pupils were in general expressing a children's view of the impending transfer and not one derived from adult opinions was, perhaps, also indicated by the generally idealistic and idiosyncratic nature of the viewpoints expressed in the groups. The former has already been well illustrated in the readiness with which they expected to make new friends if separated from existing friends in the transfer, the latter in the following preferences for and against junior status : -

"I would like to go in Mrs --- class because they've got the budgie".

"The junior fountain keeps getting blocked and you can't have a drink."

When asked to give reasons for particular viewpoints the response was often, "I don't know" or "I just know."

Finally, with regard to the group interviews generally, the evidence of the tapes revealed the contribution made by "strong" individuals in the groups and the extent to which responses often mirrored an initial observation, especially when made by one of these strong personalities :

Researcher: "What do you think about going into a new class with some older children already in?"

1st pupil: "I just think I'd like it"

Researcher: "Why?"

1st Pupil: "Because I seem to like work a lot."

Interviewer: "What about you?"

2nd Pupil: "I'd like it as well because I like doing sums and maths and things like that."

Interviewer: "Even with older children?"

2nd Pupil: "Yes"

Interviewer: "And how about you others?"

3rd Pupil: "Yes"

4th Pupil: "Yes"

5th Pupil: "Yes"

In general the formula or abbreviation of accord adopted by the second contributor such as "so do I," "same," "eight a day" was repeated exactly by subsequent contributors. As one pupil actually put it :

"I'll take his answer."

When dissension did occur in groups over a particular point, it occurred significantly more often amongst pupils from teacher B's class than those from teacher A's class. And this possibly was a reflection of the different personalities and approaches of the two teachers - teacher B perhaps being far more likely (and able in her small classroom) to enter into discussion situations with the pupils and tolerate disagreement from them in conversation.

b. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

PUPIL	CLASS	POSITION IN FAMILY
Paul	A	Only child
John	A	Elder of Two
Helen	A	Youngest of three - neither older brother nor sister had been to Fairtree
Sarah	A	Youngest of three both older brother and sister had been to Fairtree and moved on to Secondary School
Richard	B	Younger of two. Older brother now in juniors
Joan	B	Only child

PAUL - CLASS A (Only child)

Paul knew little about the junior classes to which he might transfer after the Summer Holiday. He did not know how many classes there were and that there would be older juniors present in his new class. He could not name any of the teachers to whom he might transfer, although when asked about the prospect of having a male teacher he thought this would be "Very good" and mentioned that he had been taught by the headteacher at some time during his infant years. He liked "men teachers" better than lady teachers but was unable to give any reason why this might be so. Aspects of infant life he would miss were, 'activities' and 'milk' while he looked forward to 'football' and the "extra time at school" as advantages of being a junior. Paul's only comment about the work he would face in the juniors was that it would be "harder". When asked how he thought it would be harder he replied, "The sums will be harder." Paul could obviously envisage no problems about junior life and when asked about new situations he might have to face such as junior assemblies and second sitting for school dinners he was particularly confident. Second sitting he had experienced already and, "Didn't mind it," while he enjoyed assemblies and particularly singing and so he, "wouldn't mind them." Finally, as far as other friends were concerned he felt he would be bound to be with some in the juniors and would not mind anyway if he were with other pupils.

Of the six individual interviews Paul's was one of the shortest. His replies were all very concise and revealed only

a scant perception of what changes the transfer might hold for him. He was, however, full of confidence in relation to the transfer almost, the researcher felt, to the point of diffidence.

John - Class A (Elder of two children)

John said he was looking forward to becoming a junior because, "it will be good fun, there'll be a lot more things to do like making things, cricket and football." He could not think of anything he would miss from the infants apart from the milk! John knew it would be "good" in the juniors because his junior friends had said it was. Although he would like his two best friends to be with him in his new class he was not worried if they were not because he would be "bound to have some friends" with him. He was not, however, aware that there would be older juniors in the same class and could only name one of the lower junior teachers - Miss C. John thought possibly having a man teacher would be "all right" because he had already had one at play school. John had no idea what kind of work he would have to do in the juniors but he knew it would be harder. He expected to have homework which he would enjoy because he already did some each night from his parents. The work he liked best at present was "sums" and he anticipated that was the kind of work he would enjoy most in the juniors. As far as other aspects of junior life were concerned John felt he would prefer the longer day and the opportunity to be "nearer the back" during assembly. With regard to school dinners he had not been on second sitting before but looked forward to the prospect of two playtimes at dinner time.

Although it was clear John was looking forward to the prospect of being a junior his responses during the interview were very limited and indicative of little knowledge of, or curiosity , about junior school life.

Helen - Class A (Youngest of three, neither older sibling had been to Fairtree.)

Helen said she was looking forward to going into the juniors but could not say why initially. When asked what the juniors did that she might enjoy she could not think of anything. Neither could she think of anything she might miss about the infants. When, in this context, "Activities" were mentioned she replied that she did not expect them to continue, "because you have to do more work," adding that she would not miss activities because she liked doing work, "and the juniors even do homework." The work in the juniors would be "harder" because you have "harder books" and Helen expected to be doing "Hundreds, Tens and Units" because she had started them the day before. She did not envisage having any difficulty with any work because she was, "good at everything". In response to the question, "Would you like to be with any particular friends in your next class?" Helen replied not really and would mention no names of friends. She felt she would enjoy being in a class with older pupils in it but could think of no particular reasons why. The juniors to whom Helen had spoken about being a junior had said they did not enjoy it but Helen could not say why they did not like it. As far as teachers were concerned, Helen had no preferences as to the junior teacher to whom she might transfer but she did say she would like to have a "man teacher".

In terms of the questions about the structure of her day in the juniors was concerned, Helen said she looked forward to the extra time because she liked work, she had had "second dinners" before and it was just the same, but was not looking forward to junior assemblies because she didn't like assemblies adding, "I think they are too long and everybody in my class fidgets."

Helen had very little knowledge of what it might be like to be a junior but appeared, nevertheless, very confident in her ability to cope with whatever it might entail. She gave the impression of being a very independent and single-minded child who had every confidence in her own ability.

Sarah Class A (Youngest of three, two of whom had been at Fairtree.)

Of the six pupils interviewed individually, Sarah was probably the least able. In terms of attainment her progress had been slower than the others and, following the administration of the Schools' Reading Service screening test, she was destined to receive the help of a peripatetic reading teacher once weekly during her first year as a junior. Sarah had a slight speech defect and slight hearing difficulty which caused her to talk in a voice which was noticeably deeper and louder than those of her peers.

Sarah was not looking forward to transferring to the juniors. She would miss her teacher, news and activities, "on Wednesday and Fridays," from the infants and could not think of anything she would like about the juniors. The one

consolation about transferring to the juniors for Sarah seemed to be the possibility of being in the same class as her junior friend, Heather, whom she thought would look after her. In fact Heather was a second year junior and due herself to transfer to an upper junior band. Sarah expected the work to be different in the juniors because it would be, "harder" and, "you do double writing." However, Sarah felt the sums would be the same because, "we are taking our books with us." Other new things Sarah expected to be doing in the juniors were apparatus, Netball and Rounders. Of the junior teachers, Sarah could only name Miss C and was most anxious to reveal how she had seen Miss C riding her bike in her road! The thought of having a man teacher did not appeal to her at all. As far as other aspects of her day were concerned, Sarah was not looking forward to being at school longer or to junior assemblies but she liked the idea of second sitting and the resulting "two plays" which she had experienced before.

Sarah was the only individual interviewed who said she would prefer to stay in the infants and was not looking forward to being a junior, although during the interview she revealed no less knowledge than any other individual. Sarah repeatedly raised other topics which she wanted to talk about instead. Both her older brother and sister had left the school already and she had not discussed being a junior with them.

Richard - Class B (Younger of two brothers. Older brother in the second year, juniors)

Richard was looking forward to becoming a junior only

because it meant he would have football. Apart from the introduction of football, he could, initially, think of nothing else that would be different or attractive about being a junior. The only aspect of infant life he thought he would miss was, "Activities on a Wednesday afternoon." When asked did he expect to have activities in the juniors he replied, "No" and to the question "Why?" responded, "I just know - because they're too big." The work in the juniors would be different because, "You'll have longer work, you'll be taught more." Moreover he knew there would be homework because his brother got, "sums and writing," but, whereas his brother did not like it, Richard was sure that he would enjoy it. When asked further about his brother's reaction to the juniors he replied, "I don't know, he doesn't talk about it." However, the junior class to which he wanted to transfer was his brother's class. As far as the question about the possibility of having a man teacher was concerned, Richard was totally non-committal. Richard named one friend with whom he would like to move to his new class but claimed he would not be worried if this didn't happen because he could, "make new friends." Similarly, when asked about the presence of older pupils in his new class Richard's response was, "I'll make friends with them."

Richard's responses to all of the questions he answered were very short. To some of the questions he made no answer at all, despite encouragement. In spite of his brother's recent experience of being a lower junior, he seemed to know very little about what it entailed other than the things he had observed his brother doing.

Joan - Class B (only child)

When asked where she would be going after the holidays Joan replied, "Mrs D I think," and yet, when asked where she would like to go best she said, "Miss C, because my friend might go in that one because she has a sister in Miss C's." However, Joan felt she would not be too upset if she did not transfer with her friend because she had a lot of friends and might be with them. Joan thought she "might like" the vertically-grouped situation because of the opportunities it could present for making new friends. Apart from her present teacher, Joan said there was nothing she thought she would miss about the infants. Her teacher (B) had said there would be, "lots of new things to do like making models and doing different kinds of work." Joan had no idea what kind of new work would be involved though she felt, "it might be harder work because as you get older you want to know more work." She had not yet talked to any juniors about life as a junior and when asked if being in a classroom next door to a lower junior class had taught her anything about being a junior, Joan replied, "No I only hear Mrs. D shouting." Joan was not sure about the idea of having a "man teacher" venturing, "I might like it," though she admitted she thought she would prefer a "lady teacher." As far as the new structure of the day in the juniors was concerned Joan could see no problems at all in adjusting. Joan welcomed the idea of the extra half hour at school and, although second sitting was "much noisier," she looked forward to the two playtimes. Friday assemblies she enjoyed and, therefore, expected the junior assemblies to be good because of the "different songs" she would be able to sing.

Joan was perhaps the most confident of the six pupils in the interview situation. One had the feeling she was most at ease when conversing with adults. Of all the pupils interviewed individually, Joan was the only one who mentioned her teacher as a source of information about the juniors.

PUPILS PERCEPTIONS BEFORE TRANSFER

SUMMARY

Perhaps not surprisingly, by far the "better" response to the researcher's questions come from the group interviews. This may well have been the result of the stimulus of numbers, the leadership of the strong individuals or the fact that the presence of more children simply increased the likelihood of at least one having acquired information about a particular aspect of the transfer. However, whereas the individual interviews allowed for some measurement to be made of an individual's knowledge of and attitudes to the transfer, the group interviews really only presented an idea of the reservoir of knowledge available to the group as a whole and some of the attitudes held by miscellaneous individuals - usually those with the strongest personalities or loudest voices.

Despite the inherent differences in these two interview techniques, however, there was a considerable overlap in the data obtained. Overall, the pupils perceptions generally revealed a very limited knowledge of and interest in the impending transfer. What knowledge they had was largely gained from their own observations or from other pupils, chiefly brothers and sisters or friends of brothers and sisters. Only three children, two during group interviews and one individually, mentioned their teacher as a source of information about aspects of junior life. Consequently, their definition of the transfer was essentially a child's view of the world, often combining idealism and idiosyncrasy; a definition which saw the transfer in

terms of status as seen particularly in terms of significant others who had already attained this status such as older brothers and sisters and their friends or older friends. The elements of this rise in status included, harder work, two lunch time playtimes, games and the cessation of some distinctively infant 'perks' like milk, earlier home time and activity lessons. Significantly, only two pupils said they would prefer to remain in the infants than transfer to the juniors. Perhaps the most surprising feature of the pupils' perceptions was the general lack of emphasis upon the importance of friends to pupils in the transfer situation. Most felt they would have no difficulty in readjusting their friendships if the situation arose. There was a little more recognition that their infant teachers might be missed although this was more common in the groups than the individual interviews. However, teacher C came over strongly in both the group and individual interviews as the most well known junior teacher amongst the third year infant pupils. The main differences between boys' and girls' perceptions were that the boys were more aware of the prospect of outdoor games and more girls than boys admitted to liking work. The most striking difference between the group and individual interviews arose over the question of the weekly test. While this was mentioned spontaneously in every group interview, it did not arise specifically in any individual interview - although allusions to "homework" may have encompassed it. This may well have been due to the fact that only Richard had an elder sibling who had recent experience of a lower junior class.

Having thus considered and compared the individual and group data for the pupils' pre-transfer perceptions we now turn

to a consideration of the pupils' post-transfer perceptions.

PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS POST TRANSFER *

(a) GROUP INTERVIEWS

The experiences and anxieties of the pupils on their first day at school after the summer holiday were clearly impressed on their minds. Almost all of the pupils were able to relate their feelings on the night before and the morning of their return to school. The uncertainty of who would be their new teacher and what they would have to do in the playground were anxieties shared by most pupils : -

"I didn't know what was going to happen."

"I didn't know where I had to go in the line."

"I wasn't sure who my new teacher would be."

In addition, many pupils admitted to worrying about the work they would have to do in the juniors and whether or not their friends would be in the same class : -

"I wasn't worried really, I was only worried about the tests."

"I was wondering whether I would be with my friends"

To those affected, the separation from close friends with the transfer to three junior classes caused far more disappointment than had been anticipated in the pre-transfer situation. About 50% of the pupils were separated from one or more of their friends and, while some were lucky to move with three or more 'best friends', others were completely isolated from their circle of friends : -

"I lost two of my friends."

"I cried and I pushed my sister and hurt her because she'd said that I would be in a class with my friends."

"My three best friends all went into another class."

*: See Appendix 4.

Those who moved with their friends were clearly at an advantage in their adjustment to the new situation : -

"All of my friends came with me."

"Jane and Zoey come with me but Zoey is ill today."

Despite the fact that most of the pupils separated from friends admitted they had made new friends, it was apparent that, at the stage the research was undertaken, they retained their loyalty to their former friends and generally played with them in the playground : -

"I was disappointed at first but I play with my old friends in the playground, I've made some new friends."

"I've made a few new friends but I still see my old friends in the playground."

Upon the question of loyalty one girl even recalled a friendship made and broken at the second year infant stage : -

"I lost really Katrina because she used to be in my class and I lost her last year as well."

It was clear from the pupils' observations that their relationships with their new teachers were still in a formative stage and that the bond between teacher and pupil evident in the final term of their last class had not yet fully materialised. Teachers were only mentioned in a response to a direct question, although very few children expressed any overall dissatisfaction with the teacher to whom they had transferred. When this did occur it was generally in relation to the fact that a brother or sister had been with another teacher and they had hoped to follow his or her pattern. Those children who had transferred into teacher E's class obviously had a great surprise when they found they were with a man teacher : -

"I didn't expect to be in Mr E's class."

"When I saw Mr E I was really surprised"

In general, however, the pupils appeared to have found little difficulty in adjusting to a man and the girls particularly felt that a male teacher was less strict than a female and more inclined to make them laugh : -

"Mrs. A is strict, Mr. E isn't so I like having a man teacher."

"A man teacher's nice, he makes us laugh more."

Upon the subject of strictness, those who transferred to teacher D's class and who, because of their former proximity to her classroom, had expected her to be very authoritarian were obviously pleasantly surprised and felt the occasions upon which she did shout were fully justified.

Question.

"Do you think the junior teachers are any different from the infant teachers?"

Answers

- (1) "Yes, they're stricter"
- (2) "Mrs. D isn't strict!"
- (3) "Well she is with David - sometimes we nearly jump out of our skin when she says David - !"

"The junior teachers are a bit bossier because we have to do harder work but Mrs. D is all right."

It had been implicit from the pre-transfer perceptions that, if there was a most popular junior teacher to whom they might transfer, it was teacher C. And those pupils who had consciously or sub-consciously made that choice and had found themselves

in her class were especially pleased with the outcome of the transfer:-

"I was hoping to be in Miss C's class because my brother had told me about it and I was."

"I thought I was going to be in Miss C's class and I was."

There was, however, little reference back by the pupils to the infant teachers. One girl said she, "missed being with the little teachers."

Although only a very small minority (five pupils in all) said they would prefer to be back in the infants, there was surprisingly little explicit allusion to their newly-acquired status as juniors. One boy observed that the junior teachers, "expect you to be bigger" but, other than that, there was little mention of any new status achieved. Those who felt they would rather be back in the infants were those who missed the activities or felt they had to do too much work in the juniors. For the majority, however, it was clear that, while they did not wish to lose the gain in status they had made, the reality of their new situation as lower juniors clearly based them on the bottom rung of their new ladder. The reason why they could no longer think of themselves as infants was maturely put by one pupil who observed:-

"I think if we went back to the infants it would be too easy. When we were there we were in the right age group."

Another put it more bluntly:-

"I wouldn't like to go back to the infants - it's babies!"

Their feeling of a lack of status in relation to their new situation was, perhaps, reinforced by the presence of older juniors within the same class. Very few children favoured the presence of the second years in the same class and those who did, did so on the grounds of existing or newly-formed friendships with the older children. By far the main reasons for the dislike of the vertically-grouped situation were the second year's obvious feeling of superiority and their apparent attitude of indiscipline in comparison to that of the newly-promoted first years : -

"They make fun of you all the time."

"I don't like it with the second years, they get you with their rulers and play games around the room."

The superior status of the second years was enhanced by the different work upon which they were engaged: -

"The second years are a bit bossy and they do a different kind of work."

although one or two of the obviously brighter first years were quick to realise some of the second years found their work a little difficult : -

"They're all right but they always get less in the seven times table than me"

"Some of those on eight-a-day are up every question asking the teacher."

Although in three groups the children were loathe to admit to too much concern over the weekly tests, in the other three groups, an initial admission of anxiety encouraged the others to relate their own worries about the test. The degree of concern varied from those who admitted to worrying on the morning or night before to those who claimed they

worried each night as they tried to learn them. Surprisingly, even some with records of 100% accuracy admitted to being anxious about the tests.

"I don't like it in the week learning tables and spelling. I felt all right on the first test it was just my 2x but I didn't like the 3x or 4x."

"The tests are horrible. I don't like seeing the marks. I forgot all about it 'till I was in bed once."

"I don't worry I just hope I get 10 out of 10!"

In terms of the other aspects of schoolwork encountered in the juniors there was a general agreement that in principle this was "harder." However, further enquiry into how it was "harder" seemed to suggest that the only reason it was, "harder" was because there was a lot more of it! The pupils had been genuinely surprised to find they had formal work to do in the afternoon and to find that Mathematics and English were done every day.

"We do more reading and more sums than in the infants. In the afternoon we do work as well - even sums and writing. In the infants we just used to draw and things."

"We do Maths every day and we have a lot more work and books."

Mathematics dominated their initial thoughts about the new work encountered and, in particular, the daily discipline of the 7-a-day mental scheme and the multiplicity of books with which they were faced. The need to work through the Groundwork and Foundation books together with supplementary work from Modern Comprehensive Arithmetic and Beta resulted in them having to do, "a lot of sums!" Those who had obviously not progressed onto the Mainline English Books in the Summer term

felt they were having to do a new subject called "English" for the first time. Other areas of the curriculum highlighted the different approaches adopted by the teachers. Working for the first time with such young pupils, teacher E approached Topic work in individual terms, as he had with the older juniors, and a number of his pupils obviously felt a little intimidated by the isolation involved and the deadlines set : -

"Topic Work is different. In the juniors you have to pick a subject and write about it - not off the blackboard like in Mrs. B's class.

With the other two teachers a class theme, generally stimulated by a television programme, was adopted. Opinions about topic work were very mixed, with children in the same interview groups expressing a whole range of attitudes : -

"I enjoy it."

"I don't mind it"

"I don't like it."

"I hate it!"

There was a similar difference in approach in the areas of artwork and craftwork for, while those in teacher C and D's class felt they had more than in the infants, those in teacher E's class felt considerably deprived.

"We don't do any painting or anything like that very much except for our frieze work."

Of the three teachers only one, teacher C, was credited as still allowing "Activities" which was clearly an aspect of infant life missed by the majority of pupils. However, even some pupils in her class bemoaned the fact that there was no set days for "Activities." rather they were only attainable upon completion of work.

"I miss Activities. In Miss C's class they still do Activities. In men teachers' you don't."

"I miss activities on Wednesdays and Fridays but we still have them when we've finished our work."

When the pupils were asked what they liked most about junior school life, "Games" and "Football" dominated their responses with "Film Club " following as a very distant second choice. Finally, the commencement of homework was generally welcomed by the pupils, some of whom saw it as a way of easing the pressures of the classroom : -

"It gets you through the reading books quicker."

"It keeps you working."

The routine of junior school life appeared to cause little concern to the majority of pupils. Under 15% said they still missed their milk and only about 10% said they noticed the longer day. Assemblies generally caused little or no concern and the main comment about dinner time was the advantage of having salt! The two classes who went on second sitting reiterated the advantage of two playtimes over one long one.

Although the composition of the groups remained the same in the post-transfer interviews, the pupils came from different junior classes. The eagerness of most members to contribute to the discussion during the interviews resulted in the lack of any significant control over the responses by dominant individuals. Different points of view were offered from the outset to many questions, although some pupils appeared reluctant to admit to areas of difficulty or anxiety in front of their peers. Accordingly, there was little mirroring of responses and vocabulary on the part of group members, except in those

aforementioned situations when the pupils were, perhaps, concerned about a loss of face within the group. This was particularly apparent in relation to anxiety over the test. Where the first response came from someone ready to admit to some anxiety, others would follow, perhaps giving different reasons for the anxiety. Conversely, an initial response admitting no such anxiety usually led to a similar straight forward denial in all subsequent responses : -

Example Group 1

Question

Has anything about being in the juniors ever worried you?

Answers:

1. Friday Tests!
2. Friday Tests because I only got 13 one week.
3. I worry about the test every Friday.
4. Every Friday. I worry about them all week.
5. I knew I was going to have them because my brother told me.

Example Group 2.

Question

Do you ever worry about the Friday Tests?

Answer

1. I like them I learn the words but I don't worry about them.
2. I don't worry about them either.
3. Neither do I.
4. No.
5. No.

PUPILS POST TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

b INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

<u>Pupil</u>	Infant Class	Junior Class
Paul	A	E
John	A	E
Helen	A	E
Sarah	A	C
Richard	B	B
Joan	B	B

Paul

Looking back to his first day, Paul remembered being worried the night before returning to school after the summer holiday. He did not get to sleep until after half past ten. He, "sort of wanted to come to school." His main worry was who would be his new teacher. He was not, he claimed, at all worried about whether or not he would be with any friends. However, one of his friends moved into the class with him and did, in fact, sit by him. When he found out in the yard that he would be in Mr. E's class Paul was not sure who it would be because he did not know him.

As a result of his experiences to date in the juniors, Paul felt that it was, "nice having a man teacher because he makes us laugh more." In general junior teachers, according to Paul, were different because, "most are men and all the infant teachers are ladies and the junior teachers sometimes expect us to be bigger."

Paul did not mind being with older juniors in the same class - the only difference he could see was that, "Mr E has to teach us in two separate parts, 8-a-day then 7-a-day, but Mrs A taught us all in one." He had no particular second year friends. The work in the juniors was different because there was more of it - "a lot of sums and 7-a-day." Paul felt he did much less Art and Craft and the only thing like "Activities" was Music and Movement. He enjoyed the Games and P.E. but did not seem to like the new Topic Work he had to do. The weekly test came as a surprise to him : - "I didn't know it was going to be Mr. --- and I was a bit shocked." Paul said he learnt the tables and spellings every night and still worried and could not get to sleep on Thursday nights even though he always got full marks. "I worry because its a test and not just because of Mr.---."

Paul said he had not noticed the longer day apart from having to get the bus home on his own now and milk he had also forgotten about. He was, however, not happy with second sitting for dinners which he thought was "a bit noisy." Junior assemblies were, in general, "O.K." though "sometimes a bit boring."

When asked which he preferred, being a junior or an infant, Paul answered, "being a junior, because I'm getting used to it." Despite his obvious ability to cope academically with his new situation Paul was obviously still not totally as 'at home' in the juniors as in the infants. In his own estimation he was, "nearly settled in," and would probably, "feel like a junior by Christmas." At the moment he still sometimes could not, "get to sleep thinking about what it will be like." Sometimes he would worry about "work" and sometimes about "tests" but the "worst thing is I just can't get to sleep."

John

John admitted to having had no worries about starting in the juniors apart from on the day not knowing "where to go in the line." The fact that he was called out to go in Mr. E's class was a surprise because he thought, "You had to be in the top class to have a man teacher." As far as his friends were concerned John said, "They all came with me."

John could see little difference between junior teachers and infant teachers. Junior teachers he thought, "were just the same, we do the same work, we just do more." Even a man teacher was, "just the same, no different to a lady" although he felt he preferred having a man teacher. However, John clearly disliked being with the second years who "boss you around." He had no second year friends and would much prefer to be in a single age group class.

In terms of work the main difference John perceived was that there was more of it. "Even in the afternoons we work!" Overall the work was, "a bit harder" but nothing he felt he could not cope with. The only surprise for John was 7-a-day - "I didn't expect it, it's good." Homework seemed to figure prominently for him and, of this, "sums" were the best thing, "Daddy does them with me." John appeared very unconcerned about the weekly test, "I just hope I get 10 out of 10. My lowest is 8 or 7. I learn them every night with me mum." John said he enjoyed topic work which he considered was a new aspect of work, "Mr. E gives us a book and we choose a topic like birds and we do it every day and then put it on his desk." Another subject he enjoyed particularly was Games, "Sometimes in football I score 5 goals." He did, however, bemoan the fact

that they never did any, "painting or art except for a frieze," and said he missed "Activities". Moreover, he was quick to point out that, "in Miss C's they still do Activities," adding, "that's the problem with having a man teacher."

John had not noticed the extra half hour at school and enjoyed having the two playtimes as a result of second sitting. He did, however, say that he missed having his milk at playtimes. Finally, John felt he had fully settled in already at the time of the interview, had no worries about school at all and preferred being a junior to being an infant.

HELEN

"I felt excited the night before, frightened a little bit because I didn't know what work I would be doing. My friend Sarah was called first to her class and I was sad. When I saw Mr. E. I was surprised. The second day I was excited in the morning but only a bit frightened," was how Helen described the start of her junior school career. Having spent some time with a man teacher, she now felt she preferred them to lady teachers and described Mr. E in the following terms, "He said he would get strict if we're naughty and he does. He makes the girls laugh usually." However, Helen was less sure about the vertically-grouped situation, "I don't mind it. If they talk about you I take no notice of them." She had made friends with two second years, "I just like them," but at playtimes and dinner times she played with her old friend, Sarah. Given a choice, Helen felt she would prefer all first years together.

As far as her new work was concerned Helen gave the

impression she felt under pressure because it was harder.

Mathematics particularly concerned her : - "The take-aways were terribly hard." "Sometimes I feel scared in the morning about 7-a-day and groundwork." "When Mr.--- is strict he makes me forget my place in my sums". However, she was aware the second years had even more demands made upon them, "I think we're only lower juniors which do one page. They (2nd years) can do as much as they like." Helen said she was surprised at having to do Mainline English again and complained about having to read at home, "especially on a Wednesday when I go to Brownies," and having to write more than 17 lines in her diary! Topic Work had been good at first but now it was getting "a bit boring" because, "you have to finish it and it takes a long time to do borders." Helen missed doing Art and Craft and Activities and felt she might do some after Christmas with the new teacher. She pointed out they did it in Miss C's. class and observed, "In some ways I'd like to be in Miss C's." The aspects of the junior curriculum she had taken to were P.E. and Games. Helen liked netball because Miss C had said she would soon be in the team and in P.E. she had even beaten 2nd year girls in racing. Not surprisingly, Helen did not enjoy the weekly tests. She did not like learning them through the week and worried on Thursday nights and Friday mornings that she might have forgotten the words and tables. Her lowest mark had been 17 out of 20 and she remarked that, "Michael and Christopher have cried during the tests."

The longer day seemed particularly to concern Helen, "I do get tired and it's horrible. We're usually late getting

out for the bus." Moreover, she recalled problems in relation to the bus journey and queue when bigger boys had been tripping them up, problems which had led to the headteacher's intervention and the offending boys being, "pointed out." Helen had not missed having milk and enjoyed the two playtimes at dinner time and especially the opportunity to help, "the little one_s with their coats." Helen said she liked junior assemblies because they were shorter.

When asked what she missed about the infants Helen's answer was, "the easy work, because I don't like hard work." And yet despite all of her complaints about junior life and work Helen felt she would "not really" like to be back in the infants. However, it was clear that, at the time of the interview, Helen was not yet settled into the juniors and had a great deal of adjustment still to make.

SARAH

Sarah could not recall having had any worries about starting her new junior class, although she did remember her name being called out in the playground. Her placement in Miss C's class came as no surprise to her, "I thought I was going to be in her class," and she was able to name four friends who had moved into the new class with her. Sarah was asked whether she had been disappointed not to find Heather in her new class, to which she replied, "no", and mentioned she had two new friends, Heidi and Kate, both of whom were second years. She liked the idea of the two age groups because of these new friends.

As far as her new work was concerned, it soon became clear that Sarah had her own individual work programme, "We do

different work to the 2nd years - they do the harder parts - but I do my own work." However, Sarah admitted that she did not like work but that she had to do "a lot of English," although as far as sums were concerned she just did "four or five." In talking about her work, Sarah's main preoccupation was with those perks that were allowed once the set amount was completed : - "We work in the mornings and sometimes in the afternoons and when we have finished we can get on with something." "If you finish your topic you draw on a piece of paper". Tests were no problem to Sarah because she had Miss C and not Mr --.

The main difference Sarah saw between the teachers was the fact that the junior teachers "write on the blackboard." Sarah did not like having the men teachers who came into the class on occasions to teach them, "I just like ladies, I like Miss C and Mrs. A."

The longer day Sarah did not like, nor did she like assemblies but she enjoyed second sitting at dinners because of, "more playtime." The absence of milk had not been noticed at all. Sarah did, however, miss the regular Activity lessons on Wednesdays and Fridays a claim sadly, "We don't do Activities any more."

Given the choice, Sarah said she would prefer to have stayed in the infants than become a junior, adding that she would like to be in another infant teacher's class whom she had missed out! Throughout the interview Sarah, again was much more interested in initiating other conversations than those stimulated by the researcher. In particular she was keen to talk about her visit that evening to her friend's house:

RICHARD

Richard enjoyed his first day in the juniors because it was, "nice, we just didn't do much work." He was surprised that he was put into Mrs. D's class because he expected to go into Miss C's. Richard said he had not worried at all about starting his new class either on the first morning or the night before. Three friends had joined him in his new class.

The presence of 2nd years in the class was "a bit nice" according to Richard. Although he had made some friendships with 2nd years, Richard thought they were "a bit bossy." The junior teachers, including the men teachers, were, "just the same as the infants."

Richard could see very little difference in the work he was doing, apart from the fact that there was more of it. He picked out "writing" as something he particularly had more of but in terms of content everything was the "same," except for the absence of Activities which he appeared to miss, "We only do work for the frieze," and the introduction of football which was "quite nice." He was aware that the second years did different work from him. The weekly test seemed to hold few worries for Richard except on the morning of the test. His marks had ranged from 5 out of 20 to 20 out of 20 but he claimed he had not been "bothered" the day he got only 5.

Richard enjoyed the longer day because he "liked school." Dinner times were the same for Richard because he was still on first sitting and he had not noticed the absence of milk. However, Richard did not like the junior assemblies which he felt were too long.

Although Richard felt it was, "all right now as a junior," he said he would prefer to be in the infants because of Activities and the fact that, "you don't do as much work." During the interview Richard was very loathe to develop his answers and was generally quite unresponsive, showing little emotion about any aspect of school life.

JOAN

Joan had a vivid remembrance of the night before she started junior school : - "I had an exciting dream. I felt I was really grown up because I was going into the juniors." Joan also remembered feeling very excited in the car on the way to school.

Two of Joan's friends moved to the new class with her and Joan was pleased that her expectations of Mrs. D were not wholly realised, "Well I thought Mrs. D would be very bossy, but she isn't. She shouts a lot at ---- because he keeps spilling ink and making me get into trouble." In general, Joan thought the difference between junior and infant teachers was that the former made you work harder and were a bit bossier - although she added the rider - "but Mrs. D is nice."

Joan was in favour of the mixed age group situation because of the chance it gave to forge new friendships and the feeling of increased status their presence gave : - "I think its rather nice because you make new friends, there's ---- she's me best 2nd year friend. We played stuck in the mud this afternoon." - "When you're mixing with the second years you feel rather big." However, these advantages were, perhaps, only the result of the presence of girls - "The boys, they're really bossy. We've got three 2nd yr. boys who seem to be the naughtiest in the class. All the boys seem to be the naughtiest!"

Joan saw the work in the juniors as being "much harder." and "much longer " although one advantage of it being much longer was the fact that, accordingly, they had longer stories - which seemed to account for the extra half hour! The work was harder because there was, "more writing and more books." Joan was very enthusiastic about her work generally : - "I am top of the first years in reading." "We're going into a little bit of Topic. We're learning French and about France. We're doing a bit about Italy but we're not speaking Italian yet. We did Topic in the infants but it was only about ourselves." "We do exciting things in the juniors in painting and when we make things."

One thing Joan did miss from her work in the infants was Activities but this was compensated somewhat by the introduction of Games. "We don't do too much Activities but I do look forward to something on Mondays and that's Games." The weekly test held no fear at all for Joan. She said she never worried and found it easy to learn the words and tables. Her lowest mark had been 8 out of 10 but she had got two 20's and she knew her 11 x table!

Joan had not noticed the absence of milk and enjoyed the extra time at school. She was disappointed to be still on first sitting for dinner and thought assemblies, "take a bit longer."

During the course of the interview and completely out of context, Joan indicated that she missed the presence of Mrs.B, her former teacher, in the school. "It's a pity Mrs. B isn't here, I miss her." However, despite this, Joan was obviously well settled into the juniors and was very positive in her preference for being a junior rather than an infant.

POST-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

SUMMARY

In general, the data gained from the two types of interviews was very similar. Although when asked how long they had taken to settle into the juniors, most pupils replied, "a few days," or "a week," there was some evidence to suggest that for many the transition was not as straightforward as this interpretation. Certainly, there was little indication of any great difficulty in adjusting to the routine of the longer day, the absence of milk and the new lunchtime arrangements. However, many pupils obviously felt under some pressure in relation to the demands made upon them to work formally for a greater proportion of the day. The opportunities for relaxation, conversation and creativity afforded by set activity lessons were missed by most pupils and the weekly discipline of the spelling and table test administered by the headteacher put some strain on the majority of pupils. Both sets of interviews underlined the uncertainty and resulting anxiety shared by pupils on the first day and it was clear that the presence or absence of friends in the new class situation was an important factor in the pupils' adjustment, although existing friendships were still honoured at playtimes and out of school. Most pupils did not favour the presence of second year juniors in the same class because of the apparent supercilious attitude adopted by the latter. The division of the pupils between three teachers inevitably led to comparisons of their approaches. In the group interviews particularly, because the pupils now came from different class backgrounds, the contrasting approaches of

junior teachers were a natural topic of conversation. The pupils were quick to recognise the advantages and disadvantages of being with particular teachers - although no one expressed any really deep dissatisfaction with his or her own class teacher.

The main difference in the data gained from the two types of interviews was the fact that, uninhibited by the presence of peers, the pupils interviewed individually appeared far more open to discussion of their anxieties about school life. The experienced based nature of the post-transfer perceptions also gave rise to some striking contrasts in the perceptions of individuals - dependent upon the way in which they had adjusted to their new situation.

Finally, although the children clearly found retrospection easier than projection, their essential concern with the present and immediate was delightfully illustrated in a number of both individual and group interviews, when individual pupils would completely change the subject and start to talk about a party they were going to attend that afternoon, or their approaching birthday or some other recent or impending event.

PUPILS PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFER

DISCUSSION

While pupils pre-transfer perceptions had largely been formed from information gleaned from older pupils' experiences of junior school life, their post transfer perceptions were naturally the result of their own experience. Not surprisingly, therefore, the essential difference between the two sets of perceptions lay, not in their content, but in the pupils' interpretation of the significance of particular aspects of the transfer.

Before transfer, pupil perceptions were very much bound up with the rise in status they would achieve as a result of becoming a junior. Once the transfer had been effected, however, there was very little reference to this newly-acquired status. A contributory factor to this may well have been the presence of the older 2nd year pupils in the class, for there was evidence to suggest that the latter adopted a somewhat superior attitude to the 1st years and, accordingly, perhaps underlined the view that their newly-acquired status was only that of, "first year," or, "lower," juniors.

In personal terms, the pupils in the pre-transfer situation considerably underestimated the significance of friends in their adjustment to their new class situation. Pupils separated from friends genuinely missed them while those who moved with close friends clearly felt at an advantage from the very first day. Contrary to pre-transfer expectations, few pupils had developed close friendships with the second year pupils. The affection with which the infant teachers were mentioned by the pupils

before transfer was not matched in relation to the junior teachers after transfer and this may simply have been due to the differing lengths of time pupils and teachers had spent together. Teacher C remained the most mentioned teacher in both sets of interviews while the expectations some pupils had of teacher D in terms of strictness appeared not to be fully realised in practice.

Pupil expectations that junior work would be, "harder," were realised only in the sense that they were seemingly faced with a great deal more to do - a situation to which they had to adjust. As anticipated, most pupils missed set Activity Lessons and there was a fairly widespread degree of anxiety in relation to the tests, regardless of ability. Mathematics proved to be the area where most change was experienced. The vertically-grouped organisation of the junior classes had, perhaps, more effect on the pupils' transfer than they were able to predict. In addition to the separation from friends it caused for some pupils and the way in which it perhaps devalued the extra status pupils expected to achieve from becoming a junior, it required the pupils to adjust to a two-tier class teaching system in which each year group had to bide its time while the other was taught. The apparent disadvantages some pupils foresaw in the day to day routine of junior life such as the absence of milk and the longer day largely passed unnoticed in the post-transfer situation.

The individual interviews gave the opportunity for a direct comparison of some pupils' pre and post-transfer perceptions. For example, the confidence with which Paul anticipated the transfer, despite his limited perception of it, was not

so evident in the post-transfer situation. In fact Paul was one of the few pupils who admitted to not feeling fully settled in at the time of the second interviews, in spite of having no obvious academic difficulties. Moreover, he openly admitted to anxiety which resulted in difficulty in getting to sleep at nights. There was, perhaps, even more contrast between Helen's pre and post-transfer perceptions. Before transfer, Helen had anticipated liking the juniors because of her enjoyment of work and she had shown no concern at all about the possibility of being separated from any friends. However, in the post-transfer interview, not only did she bemoan greatly the loss of her friend, Sarah, but also was very unhappy about the extra work load demanded from her as a junior. Clearly, Helen had not settled in at all, although she expressed no desire to return to infant status.

To a certain extent, the situation was reversed in relation to Joan and Sarah's perceptions. Although Joan responded in a confident manner during her first interview, her observations about junior life were somewhat guarded. Joan tended to preface her answers with comments such as, "I might like..." and "I think I..." In particular, Joan had reservations about possibly transferring to Mrs. D's class because she had heard her shouting in the adjacent classroom. In contrast, Joan was supremely confident in the post-transfer interview, expressing no anxiety about any aspect of junior life and a strong liking of Mrs. D who had turned out to be quite different to what she expected. Joan was also the only pupil who laid stress on status in both the pre and post-transfer interviews. Although,

after transfer, Sarah expressed the desire to return to the infants to be in the class of a teacher she had missed, she had obviously settled well into the juniors despite pre-transfer misgivings. The main reason for this was undoubtedly the individual attention Sarah received within the class which meant she was not exposed to the same work load as the other pupils or to the weekly tests.

John and Richard's interviews produced little contrast between pre and post-transfer perceptions. Homework arose as a significant factor in John's thoughts in both interviews. He had mentioned starting homework with his parents before transfer in relation to tests and, "sums". John's favourable anticipation of games was realised but, although he said he enjoyed having a male teacher, he felt this was a factor in the absence of Activity and Artwork. He had not anticipated the presence of 2nd years and in practice was in no way enamoured by their presence. Both sets of Richard's perceptions were noteworthy for the stress he laid upon doing as little 'work' as possible. This appeared to be his philosophy of school life and he was totally unperturbed about the transfer in both interview situations. However he did say that given the choice he would have preferred to remain an infant - because it involved less work!

Having thus considered and compared pupils pre and post-transfer perceptions, we now turn to a consideration of the teachers' perceptions of the infant/junior transfer.

TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFER

INTRODUCTION

It was in the sampling of teachers' perceptions that the microsociological nature of the research was most evident, for only two infant teachers and three junior teachers were directly concerned with the transfer. In contrast to the other two groups involved in the research, the pre and post-transfer perceptions of teachers were provided by different individuals, and, therefore, the data collected could not be compared in quite the same way. The perceptions of teachers were sampled by individual taped interviews with the researcher* but will be presented together as first pre, and second, post-transfer perceptions to aid comparison and avoid repetition. A discussion will follow the presentation of both sets of perceptions.

PRE-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

(INFANT TEACHERS)

Apart from their teaching roles, the two 'Infant 3' teachers Teacher A and Teacher B, appeared to have had very little else in common. As the description of the school setting indicated, they differed in age, home circumstances, experience, professional status, social relationships and career passage within the school; a selection of contrasts which would, perhaps, provide an interesting basis for a comparison of their respective viewpoints.

Both teachers testified to their pupils lack of knowledge about, and interest in, the impending transfer : -

* See Appendix 4

"The pupils don't know where they are going and haven't, as yet, shown any interest"

Teacher B

"The children don't know which class they are going into and I don't know. It is not the policy of the headteacher to inform them before the morning of the next term. They are prepared in so much as they know which books they are taking with them."

Teacher A

The teachers indicated that no formal and very little informal contact took place between them and the lower junior staff. Apart from the reading scheme which Teacher B, "presumed," the juniors were completing and the introduction of Mainline English 1 towards the end of the final infant year there was, they admitted, no structured continuity. This year, however, they would be "sending up" their creative writing books and mathematics exercise books for the first time and these would be accompanied by the usual, "records of a sort." The only aspect of junior life which both teachers admitted to consciously pre-empting was the weekly tables test for they both taught tables on a formal basis in preparation for these tests. As far as the actual division of their pupils into three junior classes was concerned, both teachers expected to be consulted in respect of friendships to be maintained and broken. However, the use of a standardised reading test* to divide the pupils according to reading age into mixed ability groups could, of course, result in these two considerations being mutually exclusive - if the pupils grouped socially in a similar way to which they were grouped academically.

Because the concern of this research was with perceptions rather than the dynamics of classroom interaction, observations

* Young's Test

regarding the extent to which the infant teachers and pupils negotiated over the definition of the situation were not made. However, within the context of their perceptions of their pupils prior to transfer the teachers were asked if they recognised such a negotiation as taking place and, if so, whether they could cite examples. In effect both teachers admitted an awareness of this and both saw it in developmental terms - increasing through the year as a result of growing familiarity with the teacher. Teacher A saw it in terms of the pupils requesting a particular activity or the extension of an activity and of herself entering into a bargaining situation by agreeing only if the children cleared up well later. She also gave examples of the children approaching with a request such as, "We've made up a play or a dance - can we perform it?" and of her negotiations with the pupil over the timing of such an activity. Teacher B, whom the researcher has already argued might have been more prone to debating the status quo with the pupils, saw such negotiation as largely taking place during the afternoons when the children were often allowed more choice of activity. However, although Teacher B admitted she encouraged a good deal of two - way communication, she maintained she had little or no difficulty in always finally establishing her definition of the situation as the normative one.

The infant teachers' lack of knowledge about the junior department was clearly demonstrated in their perceptions of the new situations and learning experiences their pupils would encounter in the juniors. Teacher A, in particular, openly admitted to this lack of knowledge, punctuating her answers with such comments as : -

"I don't know whether they doas such"

"I should imagine this - I don't know."

Despite the fact that she had been teaching at the school considerably longer than Teacher B, Teacher A may in fact have had less recent knowledge because of the little contact she had with the junior staff. The last of her three children who had attended the school had left in 1974.

In terms of the junior learning situation, both teachers felt the pupils would, in general, experience some initial discomfort in having to adapt to a more fixed timetable involving more rigid subject areas and time goals. An approach which would contrast with the, "more fluent and flexible timetable and free and easy atmosphere," of the infants. Teacher B thought her pupils in particular would experience more difficulty in adjusting because the increase in class size would mean their new teacher would be less accessible to them. Both teachers envisaged the teaching methods in the juniors would be "more formal." For Teacher A this could mean : -

"More teacher talk, writing down what the teacher has said, more set exercises."

- although she admitted not really knowing.

For Teacher B this meant : -

"Formal Maths, Five and Six a day, Mainline English and Topic Work involving greater depth."

Geography was mentioned a number of times by Teacher A as an example of a subject area that might be introduced, reflecting her own interest and former specialisation in that area. The stress she especially placed upon the probable introduction of separate subject areas in the juniors was argued on the grounds that : -

"You have to broaden and develop the children and the knowledge that has been learnt in the infant department has to be used. It should be broadened by the time they're seven."

(In effect there was no separate teaching of subject areas in the juniors other than Mathematics and English. All other 'academic' work was included under the general heading of 'topic work' which the children tended to pursue individually and which was usually stimulated by television programmes.)

Mathematics was seen as an area of potential difficulty by Teacher A for those pupils who were slower at reading, because of the reading standard required by both Fletcher and Alpha and Beta and, by Teacher B, because of the introduction of Mental Arithmetic. To both teachers the encounter with the weekly test would be the most obvious source of difficulty and anxiety for the children:

Teacher B: "The tests will terrify them."

Teacher A: "I think this will put the fear of God in mine to be honest."

They felt the tests should be forgotten - at least for the first term. Moreover, Teacher B questioned their value anyway and Teacher A, remarking about her tables preparation for the tests, commented : -

"My previous heads would turn in their graves if they knew we did tables in the infants."

Finally, although they thought "Activities" as experienced in the infants might be missed initially by the children, both teachers felt it would soon be compensated for by the introduction of "Junior Activities" such as needlework, craft, football and netball.

Learning experiences apart, both teachers saw the transfer to the juniors as being more difficult for the pupils because it involved the transfer to a teacher with whom they had had no previous teaching contact. The infant classes frequently joined together for stories, music and television programmes and the pupils soon became familiar with the other teachers. However, there were no "inter-departmental" changes and contact between infant pupils and junior teachers was largely restricted to playtimes, lunch-times and Friday assemblies. Teacher B also felt that the presence of male teachers would overawe some pupils - especially girls. It was also felt that being the youngest once more would require some re-adjustment on the part of the pupils, particularly at meal times when faced with larger numbers, more noise and a more disciplinarian approach by duty teachers during the meal. On the question of the vertical grouping in the juniors, the teachers' views differed: Teacher A saw it as beneficial to the younger, first year juniors because of the opportunity for learning from the older second years, although she felt some might be distracted from their work when the older group were being taught, Teacher B, from her experience in teaching a vertically-grouped class, felt the system was generally detrimental to learning and particularly so for the younger age group. Moreover, the approach adopted in the juniors treated the two age groups as virtually separate classes which she felt was quite wrong. Teacher B also felt the longer day would especially tax the pupils during their early days as juniors because of the tiredness they already exhibited at the end of the day as infants.

In individual terms the teachers saw the transfer as a potential source of anxiety for a number of their pupils. Teacher B suggested four of her pupils, one of whom was Richard, might have more difficulty than others in settling in. She also anticipated that some would invariably exhibit an unwillingness to come to school in the morning - a symptom of anxiety which, as far as she knew, had not been apparent in any of pupils over the current year. One source of knowledge about how her former pupils were settling in to their new situations, was their tendency to visit their old classroom to, "see how she was getting on." And this would be something her pupils would be much more able to do because of the location of her classroom in the junior section and on a main thoroughfare to the hall. Teacher A envisaged particular problems for Sarah who, because of her tendency to talk in a loud, deep voice, would be more recognised by the older children in the class as being different from the others. She also saw the reading problems experienced by one boy as a potential source of difficulty, not only in reading, but in other areas of the junior curriculum. On the other hand Teacher A anticipated that at least three of her pupils including Paul and Helen would benefit greatly from the transfer:

"They would all love it, they are the brighter and they would glean a lot from the older pupils and they are, of course, the older ones and are near some of the other age group and are better, of course, than some."

The minimum time Teacher A thought it would take to settle into the juniors would be six weeks for it took that, she felt, even for an adult to settle to a new situation. For

some, however, she felt it would take more than a term. Teacher B felt that the majority of her pupils would have settled in by Christmas.

In addition to their perceptions of the effects of the transfer upon their pupils, the teachers' perceptions of parental attitudes and interests, and their potential influence upon their children and the school, were sampled. The teachers were first asked for their perceptions of the current attitudes and interest of the parents based on their experience during the year. Next, they were asked whether they felt these attitudes would develop in intensity with the onset of junior status for their children. Finally, they were asked for their perceptions of how the parents themselves perceived the impending transfer.

As might be expected in such an area, the teachers' perceptions revealed a high level of parental interest in the attainment of their pupils. An interest which, in spite of the age of the children involved, was often fiercely competitive and secondary school orientated. Thus Teacher A - who had the majority of pupils in her class - described how selection was patently uppermost in the parents' minds at Open Evenings, as overheard conversations into the social advantages of Grammar School selection and direct approaches for predictions of secondary school selection revealed. Both teachers felt that the high level of competition they observed amongst the pupils in the classroom was a direct result of this inter-parent rivalry and the existence of a secondary school selection process.

Examples of the kind of questions posed were given by the teachers.

"Is he in the top five?"

"Is she the best reader in the class?"

"Do you think she will make Grammar School?"

Both teachers admitted to being influenced by the direct or indirect pressure asserted by parents. Teacher B, for example, drawing upon the experience of previous years, disclosed how she had felt obliged to adapt her approach to the teaching of Fletcher Mathematics. Initially, she had set out to work through the books on an individual basis, but the pressure of competition of parents within her class and between the two classes, forced her to change to a group approach in line with the other classes. Teacher A cited a number of examples of how individual parents attempted to impose their definition of the situation upon her and how such pressures occasionally resulted in the modification of her behaviour. For example, being aware of how some pupils were questioned at home regarding the content of their day's work, she admitted to, "throwing out ideas," to demonstrate her knowledge to parents. In particular, she indicated how she did this in relation to the child whose parents were both geography lecturers - Teacher A's main subject at college. Moreover, because of the awareness of such detailed parental interest, Teacher A, described how it was possible to build up a wariness about the handling of children from such backgrounds. She would for example, think twice about stopping them going to the Reference Library when they asked to go at an inconvenient time. This

pressure upon the teacher reached its most explicit form in the sending in of books or objects by the parents accompanied by a note suggesting, "You might like to follow this up," or, "You might like to read them this story!" Other notes were received to the effect that, "You have only heard her read once this week!" Finally Teacher A admitted how a parent contacting the school in person or by telephone about a child could often result in that child being highlighted in the teacher's eyes as a source of concern.

Both teachers saw the advent of junior status as potentially, though not automatically, heightening parental interest in their child's progress and prospects. There was obviously a sense in which the interest of some parents could not be perceived as becoming any greater! Parental interest however, was expected generally to heighten considerably with the onset of the final years of junior school and the implementation of the selection procedure. In the lower junior years, Teacher A felt there would be a tendency on the part of parents to try to delineate any areas in which the children could require more help. (A considerable amount of private tuition was carried out in the area). Although the infant teachers assumed it inevitable that the parents would view the impending transfer in terms of getting down to the real work of preparation for secondary school assessment, more significantly they saw the main immediate parental interest in personal terms. Namely, into whose class were their children to be transferred? This was another common question asked of the teachers at open evening or near the end of term and the parents' responses to even non-committal answers often revealed rigidly pre-set

views about particular members of staff. Indeed Teacher A who, living in the catchment area, was often engaged in conversation by parents, felt she had a role to play in support of her colleagues by attempting to rationalise some of the more extreme parental viewpoints. This strong parental interest in the allocation of children to particular teachers can be verified by the researcher who, from his classroom window, had seen the large numbers of particularly junior parents who remained at the school gate on the first morning of the new school year to see into whose class their children would be transferring.

The absence of any direct feedback from the junior department to the infant department meant that the infant teachers received no formal assessment of how the junior teachers viewed their intake of first year juniors. Teacher B who had more contact with the junior teachers felt that, "Intellectually the junior teachers' expectations of the first years was too high," and, therefore, they would tend to be dissatisfied with the pupils' attainment. In this respect, Teacher B felt this attitude had increased with the introduction of vertical grouping and the presence of older pupils in the class with whom the younger ones might be compared. Perhaps because of the presence of older pupils, Teacher B felt that, sometimes, the junior teachers' expectations of their first year pupils were too low in terms of their level of social development.

TEACHERS' PRE-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

SUMMARY

In spite of the differences, both personal and professional, between the two infant teachers, their perceptions and the

language in which they expressed them were remarkably similar. Neither teacher made use of what might be termed a "technical vocabulary" in her response to the researcher's questions. The only "technical terms" used which might have needed clarification for a non-educationist were, "language development," "curriculum" and "formal." Moreover, the latter term was freely used in a variety of contexts to describe, not only teaching methods, but also the content of subject areas. Both teachers' perceptions revealed a good deal of insularity in terms of their own roles. Neither teacher demonstrated any detailed knowledge of the content of the curriculum followed, or teaching methods employed; in the lower junior classes, despite the impending transfer of their pupils to those classes, the physical proximity of those junior classrooms and the ease with which social and professional contact could be made, if desired, on the staff. In addition to their own limited knowledge of the junior class, both teachers attested to the pupils' limited awareness of, or curiosity about the impending transfer and, perhaps, the reason for this in the lack of preparation afforded the pupils in anticipation of this transfer. Finally, the teachers' perceptions also revealed some of the parental pressures experienced by teachers in middle class areas, pressures, which while by no means definitive, could, perhaps, bring about a certain degree of modification in a teacher's behaviour in terms of actions and the planning of programmes.

Having thus considered the perceptions of the infant teachers directly involved with the pupils before their transfer, we turn to a consideration of the perceptions of those junior teachers directly concerned with the pupils, following their transfer.

POST TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

(JUNIOR TEACHERS)

Three teachers were involved in the teaching of the pupils following their transfer to the lower junior classes. Teachers C and D, it will be remembered, had taught these age groups before and had also taught infant classes in the school when they were first appointed. Teacher E, the only male teacher, was dealing with these age groups for the first time and was scheduled to move to another school after one term.

Overwhelmingly, the junior teachers' perceptions of the transfer were dominated by their emphasis on the academic pressure which they felt the first year pupils had to face : -
Question.

To what aspects of junior school life do newly transferred pupils find it most difficult to adjust?

Answers.

Teacher C

It's the work load really. The longer day shorter play activities and fewer play activities.

Teacher D

The amount of work expected from them.

Teacher E

The more formal set up in Maths and English than they were used to. They want to do a little bit, then get up and walk around the classroom for the next 10 minutes instead of sitting still and applying themselves.

An emphasis which may well have reflected the pressure under which they themselves felt in their teaching situation. Certainly they felt obliged to adopt, what they saw as, a far more rigorous timetable and formal approach than had been the case in the infant department : -

Question

How does their day in the junior department differ from their day in the infant department in terms of its structure?

Answers

Teacher C

It's more rigid. The afternoons are different because class lessons continue into the afternoon. There is far less joining up of classes for stories, assemblies and television.

Teacher D

They're expected to work far longer hours and to obtain more output in the time devoted to work. It's a more formal day than the infants.

Teacher E

I can't really say because I don't exactly know what went on in the infants. I anticipate that during the afternoons they had more activities, more play in the classroom and, therefore, in the juniors there is more organised work in the afternoon and the children are more aware of a timetable.

Questions

How do you think your teaching methods are differing from those your pupils experienced in their last infant classes?

Teacher C

More crammed into a shorter time. More pressure to get through more. More formal - more class teaching.

Teacher D

We do more group teaching in the juniors while there are possibly more practical approaches adopted in the infants.

Teacher E

They're more book centred in Mathematics and English and less apparatus is used. They are bound to be different to accommodate the different ages and situation in the school.

All three teachers felt they had far less time available for creative activities such as Art and Craft than the infants. Teacher C said the amount of time in her class varied from between one and five hours per week. It was difficult to estimate because she used a flexible approach, often involving small isolated groups. Teacher D generally devoted an afternoon to Art and Craft and, when the timetable, allowed up to one and a half afternoons. She felt the infant teachers probably devoted about two afternoons to this aspect of the curriculum. Teacher E felt he did considerably less of this type of work than the infant teachers.

Apart from the difficulties of working with two age groups in the class, the main source of concern for the junior teachers lay in the amount of new work with which they had to confront their 1st year pupils. And there was obviously a feeling that the pupils could have been better prepared for junior school status, particularly in the area of Mathematics.

"The infants could be further on with number work. The first term is spent on work which could have been done in the infants and this would have taken the pressure off them during the first term. For example, in the Ground-work series some pupils had only completed two out of sixteen books and then they have the five Foundation books to do."

"7-a-day was new and caused most concern. The new format - the immediate impact of the linear way of writing things out - made more demands on their reading and of applying what they had already got rather than repetition."

All of the teachers included Topic Work in a list of new areas of the curriculum encountered by the pupils. Teacher D pointed to the need for them to learn how to make use of the Reference Library. Teacher C alluded to the difficulty of running two

separate topics side by side for 1st and 2nd years, while Teacher E felt the pupils were quite enthusiastic about doing their own individual topic booklets and that he had been pleased with the standard of at least two thirds of them. The fact that some pupils had already started Mainline English was seen to have helped the work in this area but all three teachers mentioned the pupils had difficulty in and with comprehension and, especially, in getting used to answering questions in sentences. Teacher C felt that too much emphasis had been placed upon getting through the reading books at the expense of other areas of the curriculum. The children were good sight readers but lacked understanding and had often been channelled onto reading books outside of their interest age. Finally, Teacher C observed that the pressure placed upon the children tended to widen the gap which existed between the brighter and slower pupils. The former were more able to cope with it and benefited as a result of the extra work rate they achieved, while the latter could be overawed and put off by the amount expected of them.

All three teachers showed some awareness of, but little undue concern for, the problems faced by the pupils separated from their friends as a result of the transfer. Teacher C related how one pupil, when it came to her party, invited friends only from the other two junior classes and that this happened two months after the transfer had taken place! Teacher D observed that problems in relation to this aspect of the transfer had occurred in previous years and that this year friendships were being maintained with pupils in other

classes. However, new friendships had been, and were being, made within the structure of the new class. Teacher E was somewhat sceptical about the stability of friendships at this age anyway : -

Question

Were you aware of any disappointments amongst your pupils as a result of being split up from friends?

Answer

Yes, possibly, but if the friendships they formed in the class were anything to go by they wouldn't be significant anyway because they were in and out of friends half a dozen times a day and occasionally tales would come in of so and so in someone else's class.

All three teachers saw the presence of older pupils in the class as being advantageous to the first year pupils, particularly in relation to the adjustment of the latter to their new situation : -

Question

How do the 1st years react to the vertically grouped situation? Do you think it aids or hinders the transfer?

Teacher C

It has benefited them - they're more secure because of the presence of children used to the set up and able to show them. It helps the transfer but is more work for the teacher.

Teachers D and E talked similarly of the advantage of the 2nd years, "knowing the routine" - an interesting observation because these pupils were also new to their teacher and classroom. This may well have been an indication of the closeness with which the lower junior band worked together in trying to establish a common approach and uniform general

rate of progress in the basic subject areas of the curriculum. Academically, the teachers saw the vertically-grouped situation as having little detrimental effect upon the first years. Teacher C noted that the first years had to get used to concentrating while the other group was being taught but felt that, in those subject areas where both groups were taught together such as creative writing, the brighter first years benefited from the more mature stimulus given. Teacher D observed that, "If occasional tests are anything to go by, they would often do equally as well as the second years and, therefore, were not intimidated by the older ones." Although all three teachers pointed out the extra work load involved in the teaching of a vertically-grouped class, they were all in favour of this organisation in relation to the number of pupils and teachers in the junior classes. In fact, all three teachers had been involved in the discussions which had led, initially, to its inception.

The weekly tests were seen as a source of anxiety for some pupils by all of the teachers. Teacher D observed that the pupils who got the better marks were the ones who worried more. The source of this anxiety according to both teachers C and E was the fact that the headteacher himself was involved and that his approach was not really compatible with the pupils' level of maturity : -

"He has little understanding of their levels."

"I think most of them could cope with the tables and spellings they were given. It was the comparative austerity of having the headteacher come in and take the tests. The biggest problem was the speed. They were not able to keep up at first."

However, as Teacher E pointed out, the speed with which the headteacher administered the tests was, perhaps, more a reflection of the need to get through three classes and, therefore, six age groups during a Friday morning, than anything else! Tangible evidence of some pupils' anxiety was seen both in absenteeism and in open distress during the test itself:-

"There has been some absenteeism and tears during the test. Some still have to work by me during the test - those who get very worked up."

"One or two people were away Friday mornings and I had one or two letters in either, afterwards explaining why they were off, or anticipating a Friday problem."

There was, nevertheless, a general feeling amongst the teachers that, as the term went on, the children were becoming more used to the test situation and showing signs of less anxiety.

Activities and the associated, "more relaxed atmosphere," or, "freedom to move about more," of the infants formed the junior teachers' main perceptions of what the pupils missed from their infant experience. Teacher C recalled that pupils often mentioned the loss of activities even towards the end of their first year in the juniors, although she felt that this feeling was balanced by the pupils frequently commenting, "We like it better here because we work more." Apart from Teacher E's observation that, during the first few days of junior school life, the children tended to line up at the windows at 3.15 p.m. watching the infants going home, the teachers felt that the absence of milk or the later home time had had little or no effect upon their pupils. When asked what they felt their pupils enjoyed most about junior school life, the teachers

all responded in terms of the pupils' newly-attained status. Despite the fact that they were at the lower end of the juniors, the teachers felt the pupils had a strong sense of extra status, particularly because of the presence of infants within the same school situation.

Question:

What have your 1st year pupils most liked about being in the juniors?

Teacher C

The general atmosphere, the feeling of being older, more grown up.

Teacher D

The boys have liked football and they have liked the presence of older pupils but their status as a junior is important in itself. The infants are still present to weigh themselves against. In a separate junior school situation it might increase the effect of feeling the youngest of the juniors.

Teacher E

They liked the idea of sitting down in the hall when they first went in, instead of standing up like the infants. And they liked being nearer the back. Even though they are at the lower end of the juniors they feel they are of superior status because they are still surpassing the infant stage.

An awareness of the particular difficulties the first years might face because of the presence of older pupils in the class was demonstrated by Teacher E who also set out the approach he adopted to try to overcome any such difficulties:-

"It was the first time I had had 1st year juniors and I was aware that they could feel overshadowed by the 2nd years in the same class and I tried to get over that by giving the 2nd years the responsibility of taking them under their wing to help them along. You could say that's one of the advantages of a vertically grouped situation. It was one of the points that I made that there was to be no difference between them in the class. They were all members of the one class even though they were different ages."

Apart from specific instances in relation to the tests, the teachers, collectively, could recall little outward evidence of anxiety from their first year pupils. Teacher C spoke of a general lack of acclimatisation amongst the first years initially and of language indications, such as, "Is it time for the bell yet?" Teacher D said she had seen no noticeable demonstrations of anxiety but observed that parents often revealed anxieties displayed at home which were not apparent in school. Teacher E described his first years as being, "By and large quite a hardy bunch." One or two had obviously been very nervous in the initial stages and he had received one or two letters from parents saying their children were not too happy. However, whether this had been because of the juniors, the new class, someone they didn't get on with or himself he was unaware. While Teacher E felt that the pupils had, "all settled in reasonably well and happily," by half term both teachers C and D felt it would take between a half term and a term for the majority to adjust and Teacher C anticipated that some individuals would take more than a term to fully settle. When asked to name individual pupils who had settled in most readily or who had difficulty in adjusting to the new situation, Teacher C included Sarah in her list on the grounds of the difficulty she found in concentrating upon her work. None of the other four pupils she mentioned, two who had settled in exceptionally well and two who were finding difficulty in adjusting had been previously mentioned by the infant teachers. Teacher D mentioned three pupils who had settled in most

readily one of whom had been anticipated in this respect by an infant teacher and Robert whom Teacher B anticipated might have difficulty! The latter was one of the six pupils interviewed individually in which context he also demonstrated a high level of adjustment being the pupil who had enjoyed his first day because he, "didn't have to do much work!" Neither of the two pupils she mentioned in terms of having more difficulty had been mentioned by the infant teachers. Teacher E included Helen and Paul amongst those pupils who had settled in well and John, as a pupil who had had some difficulty. Two other pupils whom he mentioned as having some difficulty had been anticipated by the infant teachers, while another boy who had impressed him most in terms of adjustment had been anticipated as potentially having problems by his infant teacher!

As with the infant teachers, the question was asked as to whether the junior teachers were ever aware of being involved with their newly-transferred pupils in a negotiation over the definition of a particular situation in the classroom. Once again all of the teachers admitted to an experience of this situation within the classroom. Teacher C gave examples of discussions with pupils over the nature and position of friezes in the classroom and over some timetable arrangements, particularly during the afternoon. Although she felt completely in control over such negotiation, Teacher C admitted to being both guided and swayed by the pupils' arguments at times and generally welcomed such interchange of ideas. Teacher D again spoke of pupils' attempts to negotiate work priority changes with comments such as, "Can we do our Topic Work now?" and with requests to the teacher to talk about things brought into school

She also mentioned situations in Country Dancing lessons when the pupils wished to choose their partner or a particular dance. Teacher E mentioned P.E. and Games in particular and of negotiations predominantly initiated by him in relation to satisfactory completion of work prior to the granting of a previously cancelled outdoor Games or P.E. Lesson.

When asked to what extent the first year pupils had been prepared for transfer to the junior department, the teachers were unanimous in the view that no obvious preparations had been made. Teacher E underlined the divisions that existed between the two 'departments' :

"There is a definite break in the school - two separate camps as it were, plus the fact that teachers have been in teaching areas for a great deal of time so the children see it that way."

The need for a greater liaison and more continuity in such areas of the curriculum as Mathematics was stressed by all three teachers. In addition Teacher C articulated the obvious feeling that the work rate required in the lower juniors could be anticipated more at the infant stage:-

"They could have inspired more work and effort and become more formalised towards the end of the top infant year. They could have started 4, 5, or 6 a day and worked for a longer part of the day."

The question of how such a greater degree of liaison might be achieved was broached by Teacher E who argued that, from two such different standpoints, it would be extremely difficult.

"Would it work back from the juniors or forward from the infants? What was required basically was the staff getting together and thrashing the whole thing out."

However, in this context, Teacher E also admitted that a bridge had, perhaps, been begun with the 'passing up' of reading books and maths books and that the change in leadership in the infants - albeit an internal one - had only just taken place. On the other hand, it was, perhaps, noteworthy that the role of Lower Junior Band leader had not been reassigned following the original leader's move out of the area, a situation which seemed probably due to the presence of three scale 2 teachers within that band but which could, perhaps make a lower junior initiative for greater liaison less of a likelihood. Finally, Teacher C raised the point of the pupils' lack of any knowledge of their new junior classroom or teacher until their first day back at school and of the emotional difficulties they faced because of this. And, in this respect, she felt the pupils would benefit from a knowledge of, and visit to, their new classroom and teacher before the commencement of the summer holiday.

At the time the research was undertaken the only structured contact which had taken place between the teachers and parents had been an informal open evening held shortly after the half term break. In addition to this, of course, the teachers would have met parents during the day to day running of the class and would have received written communications from them. Both teachers C and D, in their appraisal of parents' attitudes towards their children's new junior status, stressed the parents' awareness of the extra pressure that was on the children in terms of work, an awareness that led to both concern over the children's ability to cope and a satisfaction in the knowledge that their children were being called upon to work harder:

"The parents feel there is more pressure on the children to work harder."

"A lot of parents worry about the stress factor because the children have to work more - to do a greater quantity in less time and to have to do homework."

Teacher C also saw the positive attitude of parents to the extra work load demanded of the pupils reflected in the requests from all 1st year pupils for regular homework following their initiation into this aspect of school work. The homework itself was seen by the teachers as a way of relieving some of the pressure brought about by the demands on them from their schemes of work. Teacher E saw the main concern of parents on open evening as being the reaction of their children to being taught by a man for the first time and, in particular, whether this had created any problems. Only one teacher, Teacher D, could at this stage give a direct example of parental attempts to encroach upon the teaching situation and this concerned the occasional sending in of books by a parent accompanied by a note or verbal message asking "Do you think you would like to do this?"

POST TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

SUMMARY

Despite their differences in age, experience and sex, the perceptions of the junior teachers, like those of the infant teachers, were remarkably similar in outlook. Although at least two of the junior teachers had experience of teaching infants within the school, all three teachers were strongly critical of the lack of liaison between the

infant and junior teachers within the school, They felt that pupils were not well prepared for the transfer, particularly in Mathematics and Reading Comprehension, and that they had initial difficulty in adjusting to a much heavier work load. Despite these changes they felt the pupils had to face in terms of their work, the teachers maintained there was little observable anxiety in the classroom apart, perhaps, from the early weeks of the tables/spelling tests. However, some parents had indicated that pupils were showing signs of anxiety at home. Although aware that the transfer had caused some upheaval in terms of pupils' friendships, the teachers felt this was of little cause for concern and that the vertically-grouped nature of their classes was particularly advantageous to the newly-transferred pupils. The first year pupils had adapted to changes in the general routine of school life without any difficulty according to all three teachers, who were equally unanimous in their belief that the most attractive aspect of junior life for the new pupils was the rise in status that accompanied the transfer. Finally, as the examples of the teachers' responses indicated, in all three teachers' replies to the researcher's questions, there was very little vocabulary of a distinctively educational, psychological or sociological nature.

TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFER

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the respective perceptions of the infant and junior teachers was their similarity of viewpoint, despite striking differences in age, experience and personality. Their outlook in terms of school life would appear to have been more influenced by their roles in the classroom and school than by other individual factors. The perceptions of both groups underlined the lack of liaison that existed between the infant and junior teachers. On the infant teachers' side, this was expressed in their lack of knowledge of the work of the lower junior classes and the admitted lack of preparation of the pupils for the transfer. On the junior teachers' side, this was expressed in their criticism of the pupils' preparation for junior work and the general lack of continuity they felt pertained in most subject areas. The views of the two groups coalesced on the increased formality of the work, and the increased significance of time goals which the pupils would experience as a result of the transfer. Moreover, both groups saw Mathematics as the most likely area of difficulty for the newly-transferred pupils. Perceptions differed in relation to some of the details of the transfer - for example the effects of changes in the daily routine, subject divisions and the effects of the transfer on certain individual pupils. Neither group laid stress on the problems pupils might have in relation to broken friendships but, while the infant teachers made little allusion to the rise in status the pupils might feel as a result of the transfer, the juniors saw this as a significant factor in the pupils' own

perception of what was to be gained from the transfer. In general terms, both sets of teachers saw the vertically-grouped situation as favouring the 1st year juniors, and, perhaps, especially those who were more able. Both sets of responses were typified by the lack of technical language utilised by the teachers and this may well have been due to the way the questions were phrased or to the familiarity of the researcher to the teachers, as to any other factors.

Having now considered both pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the transfer, we turn, finally, to a consideration of parents' pre and post-transfer perceptions.

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFER

INTRODUCTION

As the overall introduction to this presentation of data indicated, a questionnaire was used to sample parental perceptions of the transfer. This seemed to be the most efficient way of gaining data from the largest and most disparate group involved in the research. In addition to this questionnaire survey, interview techniques were used to sample separately the perceptions of the parents of those pupils who were interviewed individually. This would not only facilitate a comparison of the data gained from these two sampling techniques, but would also enable individual pupils' perceptions and those of their parents to be directly compared. In line with the two sections upon pupils' perceptions, the data gained from the larger group sample will be presented first, followed by the data gained from the interviews. Each set of perceptions will be summarised and the section will conclude with a discussion of parents pre and post-transfer perceptions.

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS BEFORE TRANSFER

A. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

As might be expected, the information gained from the questionnaire responses illustrated some of the general inherent weaknesses associated with this data-collecting technique and particular weaknesses associated with the actual questionnaire involved.* These weaknesses will be discussed, either as they

* See Appendix 6

arise in the text, or in the summary following the presentation of data.

Out of thirty eight questionnaires sent out at this pre-transfer stage, twenty were returned, providing an above-average response of some 55%. In quantitative terms there was a great variation in response among the questionnaires. The minimum response was only thirteen words, while the maximum response was three hundred and sixteen words. Of the twenty replies, however, only five were noteworthy for their extreme brevity. In terms of the motivation to respond to the questionnaire, there was some indication that a small number of parents found the subject of the research - transfer within a primary school - somewhat hard to understand. This puzzlement was seen in its most explicit form in the following postscript to one of the questionnaires.

"The nature of this questionnaire puzzles me because I have never envisaged that there would be any great difference between the infant and junior sections - especially at --- where the two are integrated in one building and with one head. I think it is certainly advantageous if the children do not anticipate any marked differences."

The content of the parents' perceptions strongly demonstrated the extent to which parents were uninformed about the total school situation. In addition to unattempted questions, the questionnaires abounded with comments and prefaces indicative of a lack of knowledge about the school : -

"I am not fully conversant with the reasons for operating this system."

"I am unaware of ..."

"From the little the children tell me..."

"I haven't a clue."

"Having no experience of junior school...."

"I hope...."

"I would hope....."

The obvious feeling of ignorance and frustration which most parents felt in the face of the questioning was summed up in the following postscript to a questionnaire:

"This questionnaire has made me realise how little I know about junior school. Unless one has had a child in the junior school how is one to know what difference it will make? Your methods are so different from when I was at school, I don't even feel I know much about the infants, never mind what's to come in juniors."

Moreover, the respondent's admission that she still felt uninformed about the infants, despite her daughter's three years as an infant, was reflected in the absence of any significant difference in the amount of knowledge of impending junior school life displayed by those parents with older, junior children over those without older children. Of the seven questionnaires which indicated an older child was in or had passed through the junior department, four were amongst the least knowledgeable of all.

Despite the absence of any direct allusion to individuals in the questions posed by the questionnaire, there was a significantly high response to questions in personal terms. Fourteen of the questionnaires contained at least one response highlighting the significance of an individual or individuals in answer to a question. Above all, the success of the transfer in both emotional and educational terms was seen as dependent upon the teacher. Emotionally, the children had to

cope with the termination of one relationship and the building up of another, the success of which lay in the hands of the new teacher.

Question:

What aspects do you think your child will miss most of all. . . . ?

Answer:

"His main difficulty will be missing a teacher he knows and likes."

Answer:

"If the relationship between the child and the teacher is less close and warm I think she will miss that to begin with."

Question:

Can you foresee any aspects of junior school life which may cause your child concern?

Answer:

"I think it really depends on the teacher."

Answer:

"I think this depends to a large extent upon the teacher but I think he will settle quickly."

As will be demonstrated, there was little regard for the principle of vertical grouping in school organisation, but even this could be made to succeed given the right teacher:-

"From our experience with our older child the success of the vertically-grouped class is related to the skill of the teacher."

"It (vertical grouping) all depends on the teacher and if he or she is happy and enthusiastic."

The question of vertical grouping itself was by far the most controversial issue raised by the questionnaire. Only one questionnaire had no response to this question and, in general,

there was more written about this topic than any other. However, for at least two respondents the researcher's attempt to incorporate an explanation of this method of class organisation into the question was not successful:-

Question 5

How do you feel about your child changing from a single age class of top infants to a vertically-grouped class of first and second year juniors?

Answer

"I thought she has had classes of mixed ability children already in Mrs.--- class last year and even this year with Mrs.---, so I don't really understand what difference it would make."

Another parent understandably assumed from the question that the children, therefore, stayed with one teacher for two years and responded in terms of the advantages this would have. However, this was in fact not the policy of the school and the children moved within the band after one year to another teacher. Of those who did understand the question, a clear majority were strongly against this form of organisation. In the first place, many parents could not see the reason for adopting such a method of grouping:-

"I fail to see the necessity of it in a school the size of"

"I am not fully conversant with the reasons for operating this particular system."

Secondly, most parents could not see how satisfactory teaching or learning could take place in the context of such a wide age range:-

"I am unhappy about this as she is not a forward or competitive child and will be overshadowed by the older children. Conversely, in second year juniors she will be looking to mother the younger children instead of concentrating on her work."

"I feel sure the children must find this confusing and I would prefer the single age class."

"It would seem to me that a vertically-grouped class would make life much more difficult for the teacher and would, therefore, adversely affect the children."

Thirdly, five parents saw the change to a vertically-grouped situation as increasing the likelihood of friendships being broken by the transfer:

"If one or two of her special friends move with her it will take no time at all for her to settle in but if they are separated she will take several weeks."

"Vertical Grouping will not be a problem, except that children can be separated from their friends. This aspect does not seem to be considered in deciding groupings."

Of the two age groups involved in a vertically-grouped class, most parents felt any benefit to be derived would fall to the younger children, but at the expense of the older age group:

"I am pleased for the 1st year - doubtful for the second year."

"The first years do well but the second years do not as a lot of time they seem to be repeating work done in the previous year."

Those parents who expressed a more tolerant attitude to vertical grouping mostly did so for one of three reasons:- either because of previous experience of this form of grouping, or because of the advantages this might have in increased competition or demands on the children or because they felt the skill of the teacher was more important than the organisation of the classes.

As the ensuing detail of the parents' perceptions of the junior school curriculum and approach will, perhaps, illustrate,

the transfer to juniors was seen as an important turning point in their children's education. Those aspects of infant life, it was felt would be most missed were:- their infant teachers, play activities and mid-morning milk. These three, either individually or in various permutations, dominated parents perceptions:

"His main difficulty will be missing a teacher he knows and likes and the known routine, especially activities"

"The teachers and possibly milk at playtime."

The only other aspects mentioned were earlier home time (2), the opportunity of being met by mother (2) or, "Having mum to herself until the others come home," (1). Parental perceptions of those aspects of junior life their children would enjoy fell largely into three distinct categories:- The rise in status, the wider curriculum and the challenge of harder work or increased competition.

"Being a junior and the associated status within the school."

"Being more senior."

"I hope he will enjoy the wider scope of studies and sport."

"I think she would respond to being expected to work harder and would enjoy doing so, also the extra curricular activities of the junior school."

"He will enjoy an increase in competition."

"The challenge of hopefully harder work."

Of these three categories, the one which had by far the greatest support was that which saw the pupils' enjoying the challenge of harder work and increased competition. And this

stress upon an increase in the level of work to be encountered was strongly reflected in the parents' own viewpoints of what would or should constitute the curriculum and teaching approaches in the juniors. Above all, the emphasis was upon a reduction of play activities, an emphasis which, for the most part, saw little importance or value in play as a method of learning:-

"I sincerely hope that he will be able to work instead of play."

"Hopefully there will be more work and less play."

"More serious work and less play."

In the majority of comments there was a clear distinction made between play and work or learning. Only a small number of parents equated play with learning or saw it as having some validity.

"I would expect less play-type work."

"More time spent in formal instruction and project work and very little time devoted to learning through play situations."

Almost overwhelmingly, the parents, explicitly and implicitly, saw the junior teachers adopting a formal approach to teaching - the constituent aspects of which were an increase in the level of work, the number of subjects areas encountered and the amount of time apportioned to each activity.

"More clear definition in subject matter, beginning subjects such as history, geography and elementary science."

"More emphasis on direct instruction rather than contriving learning situations."

Only three respondents saw a necessity for the teaching situation to cater for individual needs or differences, one in the

context of the structure of the day and two in the context of vertical grouping : -

"The structure of the day should be arranged to allow for the development of the individual's initiative to enable them to work and think independently."

"It all depends upon the teacher and if a child can work at his own rate of ability."

"I think this depends a lot on the teacher, the size of class and, providing the child is given work to stretch and meet his needs, I think it could be good for him."

This definition of junior teaching so predominantly in formal, direct instructional terms probably explains the anxiety which was expressed over vertical grouping. In the context of such a definition the wider age range of a vertically - grouped class would certainly seem a most impracticable proposition!

Against such a background of views regarding the increase in work level and rate expected with junior status, it is not surprising that, when asked about the effects of transfer upon their children, many parents anticipated dramatic changes in their children's rate of academic progress at school. Of nineteen responses to this question, thirteen expected an acceleration in their child's progress in one or more subject areas.

Question

Do you expect to see any changes in your child's rate of progress in any particular areas of the curriculum as a result of his/her transfer to the junior department?

Answers

"I should expect the progress will be quite rapid. I found this with my other child."

"I should expect his number work to improve greatly. We should also expect him to work more on his own

and show a general improvement in most areas as a result."

"Yes more progress in the 3 R's"

Those who were not expecting any sudden changes in this respect made such an assessment either from their child's previous pattern of progress, or because they felt adjustment to the new situation would have to come first.

"Not really, rate of progress has been steady and so would expect it to continue steadily."

"Probably not and certainly not at first."

Overall, however, the parents tended to feel that their children would take very little or no time to settle into their new class situation. Only four parents thought it would take a half term and or more and most felt it would be only a matter of a week or two before their children were fully adjusted.

Question

From the experiences you have had of your child starting school and changing classes, how long do you think he/she will take to settle into the junior class?

Answers

"As the building, the headteacher and some of her classmates will be unchanged, I don't think it will take her any longer than it took her to settle into 2nd and 3rd year infants. I would expect the class to be pretty well settled by the middle of the 2nd week."

"Within one week."

"Immediately."

"As every teacher she had had said my daughter took a long time to settle I would say about half a term."

Accordingly, there was very little response to the question of whether parents could perceive any aspects of junior school life which may cause their child concern. One parent mentioned her child's feeling it would be all work and no play, adding the rider that, "I hope to a certain extent he is correct!" Another mentioned fitting homework into her play schedule at home and another, "Keeping up because he is the youngest in the class." Only two parents mentioned the tests as a possible source of anxiety : -

"Will be very nervous when doing the formal weekly spelling and maths test."

"Yes, but he is a born worrier. Tests generally cause considerable anxiety for a while and new work generally. Football may also worry him so we have been encouraging him to play more at home."

Finally, in general terms, the completed questionnaires fell largely into two categories: those which were marked by their overall brevity, concise vocabulary and often open criticism and those which contained lengthier, more reflective answers - indicative, perhaps, of the apportioning of more time to the exercise and more concern over, and involvement with, the day to day school life of their children. From the evidence of those few questionnaires which, by their content, revealed the sex of the respondent, it would be the researcher's contention, albeit unproven, that the former, in general, represented fathers' perceptions and the latter mothers' perceptions.

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS BEFORE TRANSFER

B. INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Of the six pupils interviewed individually, the parents of only five were available for interview. No effort was made by the researcher to replace this pupil by another, because it was felt that this kind of situation was often a natural outcome in research and must be accepted and allowed for - just as one would not expect a 100% return of questionnaires. All interviews took place in the parents' homes during the evening after prior arrangement. In all but one case only the mother was available for the interview. Summaries of the interviews are presented in the same order as those of the pupils involved.

<u>PARENT(S) INTERVIEWED</u>	
Paul	Mother
John	Mother & Father
Helen	Mother (Teenage older brother & sister present)
Sarah	Mother
Richard	Not available
Joan	Mother

Paul - Mother only

In personal terms, Paul's mother made no mention of any individual teacher or pupil in relation to the transfer. She felt Paul would not have any social problems as a result of the transfer because he had no particular friends. Mrs. L felt that relationships with the teacher would not change because of the transfer - "at least not at first - they may later, although I'm not sure." She envisaged no problems with a change to a male teacher unless he high-lighted sport, "Sport does not matter to Paul. He will participate but could not care less really." In relation to vertical grouping she felt that Paul's previous experience in such a class was good but, "It depends on the children and their ability. It is, perhaps, more difficult with slower pupils." The only aspect of infant life Paul would miss would be, "Coming home at 3.30 p.m. and being met by me - after the first week he will have to get the bus." In terms of junior life, Paul would enjoy, "The access to more books and the library; he particularly enjoys reading." Paul's junior day, "Will involve more work and less play. There will be different types of activity such as using the library. What play activities are used will be more purposeful." When asked if she felt teaching methods would be different, Mrs. L felt that, "Expectations would be higher and the approach would not be quite so free and easy." Despite these changes, Paul's mother felt his rate of progress would not change - although no areas of difficulty were anticipated. Mrs. L could not envisage Paul having any difficulty settling into his new junior

situation, "Paul has only ever worried over small things like being late, forgetting a book or dinner money." However, she did admit that, "These could be the surfacing of deeper worries," but added, "but I do not feel this is the case with Paul."

Mrs. L had very little knowledge of what went on in the school generally, and, therefore, found it difficult to project what changes, if any, Paul might encounter with junior status. She had no worries at all about Paul in social terms as a result of the change of classes and obviously considered him fully able to cope in the juniors without any problems apart from the minor worries that he already exhibited in relation to school.

John R - Mother and Father

John's parents saw the most significant aspect of the impending transfer as being whether or not John's close circle of friends would accompany him into his next class.

"Socially - it will be very important to John that he should transfer to the next class with his friends - at present they are closing ranks as it were and becoming comrades and very much looking forward to going together in the next class. This has been especially noticeable this last term. His own group is very important and he has put a lot of time into this aspect of school life - probably too much."

This was also a factor in their criticism of the impending vertically-grouped situation, which organisation they failed to see the need for in a school the size of Fairtree.

"It concerns us that John is the youngest in his class and now the gap will widen even further. John will cope in terms of personality but, in terms of work, problems may arise."

Mr. R. thought that, of the two age groups involved, the younger ones would benefit most from the older ones who might develop "paternal instincts." However, he felt that parental annoyance with this organisation could filter down to the pupils and so affect their attitude. John's parents felt that he had been ready for each change as it had arisen and had benefited from the change. Accordingly, they felt there was nothing about the infants he would greatly miss or anything in particular about the juniors to which he would greatly look forward. In teaching terms, John's parents envisaged that, although play activities would still be utilised in 1st year juniors, they would be more purposeful and, "not just play for itself. The teachers will try to get more out of the play activities. Altogether a more formalised curriculum will be moved towards." John's father particularly felt that the transfer would coincide with a major change in John.

"7 yrs - 8 yrs is, in my opinion, a time of major change in the development of personality traits and John is moving towards this. A more mature John should result and teachers should make - children more aware of how things work and why things are etc."

One particular area in which they were looking to change in John's rate of progress was Mathematics - an area which he had, "not understood at all." They felt that the change from, "Fletcher to a more traditional approach," would result in their being able to help him more. Finally, John's parents felt that the transfer would create no problems at all for John and that he would settle in easily and quickly, providing that he transferred with his friends.

Although John's parents and, particularly, his father held some strong views about education they had, in reality, very little knowledge about the school. Certainly they appeared to have no feed back from John, whom they felt had little interest in school and who never mentioned school at home. During the course of the interview they only mentioned one teacher by name - John's middle-infant teacher - and they did so in a critical manner, being especially annoyed at the report they had received on open evening from this teacher.

Helen P (Mother but older brother and sister present)

Helen's mother was supremely confident about Helen's ability to adapt to the new junior situation with ease. Mrs. P's only reservation was that the reorganisation into three vertically-grouped classes might disturb the strong group feeling that Helen and five friends had developed. The vertical grouping itself she saw as no problem, for previous experience in the family, albeit not at Fairtree, supported this method. Moreover, Mrs. P felt that, academically, the younger age group would benefit more from of this situation. Helen's mother could think of nothing that Helen would miss from the infants and, in reply to the question of which aspects of junior school would Helen particularly enjoy, observed, "The whole of school is a challenge to her." However, she did add that, "Games and especially the increase in competition," might impress Helen most of all. Mrs. P felt that the structure of Helen's day would change with the transfer in that, "More time will be spent on academic activities," adding that, "school is not the place to play, but some people don't allow

their children to play at home and this requires compensation." Accordingly, she felt that 'Activities' would still be used. In terms of teaching methods, "A more serious approach would be adopted owing to the influence of selection. There would be teaching how to take an exam or test." Despite these changes, Mrs. P did not envisage any changes in Helen's rate of progress as a direct result of the transfer. Helen's mother could foresee no problems at all with Helen's transfer. The child would settle in, "in no time at all." Helen's only problem might be, "fitting her homework into the context of her play at home." If she were to encounter a male teacher Helen would enjoy this "immensely" for, "The individual teacher is immensely important in the progress of the child."

Mrs. P, supported by her two older children, obviously saw Helen as an independent, adaptable and bright pupil for whom the transfer would be no problem. She appeared, however, to have little knowledge about the school, which may well have been due, in part, to the fact that she had a full time job and three children (one of whom was disabled) all at different schools.

Sarah F - Mother only

Mrs. F's perceptions of the transfer were very different from those of other parents, because of the particular problems experienced by her daughter and her perceptions of her daughter's needs as a result of these problems.

"Sarah's intelligence is above average but she has a speech problem and reading and writing are intertwined with this. Over the years other parts are taking over and solving this but it all takes time."

Because of her belief that Sarah needed time to overcome her difficulties, Mrs. F felt that the transfer was inappropriate for her daughter who needed another year as an infant pupil.

"Sarah is still very much a baby. She needs another year in the infants but our educational system is not that flexible. With Sarah, whatever stage she is at - from babyhood onwards - it has always taken her longer. She will I am convinced get there in the end but unfortunately with our educational system as it is she is not afforded the time."

Mrs. F felt that the change from infants to juniors was, "a big step, as with the change from juniors to secondary. It marks a big change in their outlook." Moreover, she could see no reason for mixing age groups in a vertically-grouped organisation of classes and anticipated that this could put more pressure on Sarah as other children realise and, perhaps, point to her greater difficulties. Mrs. F felt that Sarah had benefited particularly this year from her relationship with Teacher A, a relationship which was, perhaps, greatly enhanced by the fact that teacher A lived next door - although both houses were set in large grounds. However, Mrs. F anticipated few problems with Sarah in terms of settling into her new junior class.

"She will have no difficulty in settling. Sarah has no worries about school. She has been going to school from the earliest moment with her two older children."

In terms of friendships, Sarah tended to mix with younger children and Mrs. F felt she would continue to do this in the

juniors. A new teacher was not envisaged as a problem because Sarah's mother felt Sarah related better to adults than to children. Nevertheless, Sarah would miss, "The easy, more home like atmosphere of the infants and the more relaxed relationship with the teachers."

Although she had no qualms about Sarah's ability to adapt emotionally to junior life, Mrs. F felt that the transfer was inappropriate to Sarah's present stage of development - a viewpoint which may well have been bound up with her appraisal of the change involved in this transfer. However, despite having had two older children (now of secondary age) at Fairtree, Mrs. F could give little if any detail of what changes might result with the transfer. Apart from the view that, "In the infant school they learn through play, whereas in the junior school a more formal approach is applied," she could give no other information about what the change would involve.

Joan G - Mother only

Joan's mother looked forward to the transfer because she felt it would result in Joan's exposure to a greater amount of "authority and discipline." In this respect she contrasted Joan's present (teacher B) and former teachers feeling that her present teacher had too little authority in the class - "Joan has a different respect for a teacher who has a more authoritative approach." Mrs. G felt that a male teacher would be especially beneficial in this context.

The possible separation of friends as a result of the transfer Mrs. G felt would not create any difficulty for Joan because she had previously adopted and made new friends when involved in a "class split." Because Joan was one of the older children in the class (December born), her mother felt that the vertically-grouped situation would favour her. The only aspect of infant life Mrs. G felt Joan might miss was 'Activities' but added the rider that Joan had, "already accepted that there will be a need to work harder." The aspects of junior life she felt Joan would enjoy most were listed as :

"More opportunity for English and especially reading. She will enjoy the wider and deeper scope of reading. Joan enjoys participating in games and will enjoy the more competitive elements in junior games - She has become more aware of her 'house' towards the end of the infants."

As a result of the transfer, Mrs. G felt that the following changes would take place in Joan's day:

"Lessons will be longer. I expect her to get her head down more into solid subjects. There will be less activity and more basic work. The curriculum will become narrower with emphasis on the basic 3 R's and basic Geography, History and Language Development".

In terms of teaching methods, Joan's mother felt, "There will be more direct teaching as opposed to individual working from a book and the start of homework in Maths and English, especially where any difficulty lies." Moreover, she anticipated that Joan's progress would benefit from the transfer and in particular from the increased authority, the use of deadlines and the narrowing of the curriculum which she anticipated would be effected as a result of the transfer. Finally, as

Joan had never had any problems adapting to new classes before, Mrs. G felt she would adapt to the new junior situation in her, "usual self-assured manner."

The desire for more authority in the classroom was a significant feature of Mrs. G perceptions and was a reflection of her attitude towards Joan's current teacher. In addition, she laid a great deal of stress upon the changes she anticipated in the curriculum - namely a great deal more concentration upon the basic "solid" subjects.

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS BEFORE TRANSFER

SUMMARY

Parental perceptions were sampled by two, quite different, methods and, perhaps not surprisingly, there were some differences between the data gained from the two respective methods. Moreover, each method had its own disadvantages. The problems associated with questionnaire return (in all, eighteen questionnaires were not returned), level of response to questions and the full comprehension of questions have already been touched upon. In addition, there was the possibility that the content of the questionnaire was not an account of the parents' own perceptions, but the result of discussion with other parents or their children. In fact it was clear from some responses that such discussion had taken place, despite the direct challenge of the questionnaire.

Question 3

What aspects of junior school do you think your child will enjoy most?

Answer

"His comment on this question was that he would enjoy the privilege of having salt with his dinner."

In the interviews with parents there was the danger of the researcher providing too much direction in relation to the parents perceptions and of a lack of frankness on the part of the parents. Indeed, it was possibly the existence of the latter situation which gave rise to one of the significant differences between the data gained from the two techniques. Namely, while the responses in the interview situation tended to be idealistic and, in general, not too critical, those on the questionnaires tended to be more forthright and uncompromising. A contrast which, perhaps, reflected the subjectivity of the interviews and anonymity of the questionnaires. In fact, two questionnaires were openly polemical in their criticism of the school. One gave a good deal of space to criticism of the junior teaching, particularly in relation to reading, based upon the experiences of an older child. Another consisted almost solely of criticism of the infant teaching, as the following extract, based on just the even numbered questions demonstrates.

Question 2

What aspects of infant school life do you think your child will miss most of all when he transfers to the juniors?

Answer

Reading once a week.

Question 4

Can you foresee any aspects of junior school life which may cause your child some concern?

Answer

Due to lack of preparation in the infant school he will doubtless have more difficulty with his reading.

Question 6

How do you think the structure of your child's school day will change with the transfer to the junior department?

Answer

I sincerely hope that he will be able to learn instead of play.

Question 8

Do you expect to see any changes in your child's rate of progress....as a result of his transfer to the junior department?

Answer

I very much hope that his progress increases tenfold!

Another contrast which, perhaps, arose for similar reasons was that over the expression of a lack of knowledge about school life. Although parents' lack of knowledge about the school generally was a feature of the information gained from both sampling techniques, parents were far more inclined to admit ignorance of aspects of the school on the questionnaires than in the interviews. While many responses on the questionnaires were prefaced with admissions of a lack of knowledge or that pure guesswork was being called upon, such admissions were absent in the interview situations, although it was clear the parents had no more awareness of what went on in school.

It was evident from both sampling techniques that the majority of parents saw the transfer to the juniors as a significant stage in their child's career. For them the transfer meant the start of education as they would define it -- namely an end to play-centred learning and the beginning of a more formal, teacher-centred approach, an approach which would be

based upon a narrower curriculum of more clearly defined subject areas and stress on the 3'Rs. It was, perhaps, because so many parents defined education in these terms, that, similarly, the majority of parents found the idea of vertical grouping unattractive. Not only did they fail to see the reason for such an organisation of the classes, but they also felt that such a wide age range within a class would present considerable difficulties for the teacher. In personal terms, about 60% of parents attested to the significance of the teacher in relation to their child's progress and, accordingly, the success of the transfer. However, only about half of this number alluded to the significance of the splitting or non-splitting of friends in relation to the transfer. Finally, those aspects of infant life the parents felt would be most missed were the teachers, activities and milk, while the most attractive aspects of junior life were felt to be the rise in status and the increased scope and competition the junior curriculum would offer.

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS POST-TRANSFER

A QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

In the post-transfer situation the percentage return of questionnaires increased from 55% to 70%. Moreover, there was a general increase in the quantitative levels of response on most questionnaires. Of the twenty six questionnaires returned, six had fewer than thirty five words (the lowest response being just four words), one contained just over two hundred words and one in excess of four hundred and fifty words. These apart, the majority of replies varied between fifty and one hundred words. This extra response in terms of both return and content may possibly be explained by the sense of interest created by the previous questionnaire, the concern of the second questionnaire with the present and recent past rather than with impending events and situations or by its timing not long after the beginning of a new school year.

Although only one question (number 5 on Vertical Grouping) referred specifically to the social processes of the transfer for the pupils, a considerable number of the responses to other questions were made in these terms.

Question 1

How do you feel your child has settled into his or her new junior class?

Answers

1. "Not as well as we expected because none of his friends from his previous class have moved into the class with him."

2. "Well, as she has been reunited with her best friends."

Altogether, five of the questions (apart from question 5 on Vertical Grouping) gained responses stressing the importance of pupil friendships to the transfer. Moreover, the five questions together provoked a total of eighteen responses on these lines, emanating from 35% of the parents actually sampled. In contrast there was little mention of teachers generally. Of only three questionnaires which spontaneously alluded to teachers, one did so in terms of the previous infant teacher, one in terms of the current class teacher and one in relation to the extra contact with teachers generally that the junior timetable afforded.

Vertical grouping still proved to be a most controversial topic amongst the parents. However, although the overall balance of opinion was still weighted against this form of organisation, it was less decisively so. It had been quite wrongly assumed by the researcher that, because their children were now in vertically-grouped classes, the parents would have no difficulty understanding this concept.

Question

How do you feel the vertically grouped situation is working in relation to your child (a) academically? and (b) socially?

Answers

1. "I haven't any idea of the definition of the above."
2. "I am sorry I still do not understand what you mean by this."
3. "I wasn't aware there was any special grouping system."

In the context of the lack of understanding of this terminology by some parents on the first questionnaire despite the qualifications inherent in the question, it is clear that this question on the second questionnaire was poorly phrased, highlighting again comprehension as one of the basic problems associated with the use of this sampling instrument. As the above examples indicate, the question on vertical grouping was framed in two parts. In relation to the academic side of the question alone, the responses were, if anything, weighted slightly in favour of this organisation. Those who replied favourably to this aspect of the question did so on the grounds of the greater challenge and increased competition they saw afforded by the pupils' new class.

"I think the challenge of doing some work as well as or even better than the second years is good."

"He is encouraged to try harder to emulate the success of others."

"It is helping to speed up his development"

The arguments put forward against vertical grouping in this context included the difficulties for the teacher the disadvantages for the second years in particular and simple gut reaction!

"I do not agree with the vertically grouped situation and feel it must be very difficult for the teacher."

"I think time must be wasted teaching two age groups."

"I anticipate the vertical grouping situation to work to the disadvantage of the second year children."

"Having had no experience of any other system I feel I have no basis for comparison, however I feel the system must be disadvantageous."

Socially, only six parents saw vertical grouping in positive terms. However, its detrimental effects in terms of the splitting of existing friendships were alluded to, not only in answer to this question, but in response to other questions. Moreover, while only three parents referred to new friendships established with the older pupils, twice that number indicated a lack of liaison with the older pupils and some gave evidence of anti-social behaviour on the part of a minority of second years.

"Socially he keeps to his own age group."

"She sticks to her age group."

"There appears to be a very rough element of boys in the older section."

"The second years act and consider themselves superior to the first years who feel at a lower level and the second years make this evident."

In response to the question of whether there were any aspects of infant life which their child missed, 51% of parents replied with an emphatic "no" or "none". Although the three aspects which dominated parents' pre-transfer perceptions - teachers, play activities and milk - were present amongst the replies given, there was far less stress upon them and most parents responded in terms of a single point rather than in permutations. Only three parents mentioned "Activities," one the infant teachers and two milk - with the problem of the junior drinking fountain again coming to the surface!

"She doesn't miss being an infant. I think she misses the milk break and seems to be very thirsty when she comes home. Often she says she can't get a drink of water because the fountain won't work."

The earlier home time was mentioned by two parents while another parent mentioned, "The lack of responsibility he enjoyed previously," and another, in equally cryptic terms, "The easier life!" Finally, one parent mentioned the loss of friends from the previous class.

The parents' general lack of interest in looking back to their children's infant careers was, perhaps, indicative of their satisfaction with the way their children had adapted to junior life. Certainly there was no corresponding shortage of responses in relation to the question about the aspects of junior life which parents felt appealed most to their children. In fact, only one questionnaire had no response at all. However, the emphasis placed upon competition in the pre-transfer perceptions was completely missing, with only one out of twenty five responses alluding to this. Although eight parents mentioned academic work in some form or another, it was generally in the context of a wider curriculum or particular subject likes rather than in terms of increased difficulty or challenge.

"A general enthusiasm for all subjects."

"The extra work encountered especially number work and creative activities."

Ten parents mentioned the attraction of outdoor games while six parents alluded to the children's enjoyment of the extra status or privilege gained from being a junior.

"She has a certain satisfaction in simply, 'being a junior' as distinct from, 'only an infant'."

"The boost to his ego. He feels he has hit the big time now!"

A small number of parents answered the question in very general terms of well-being as for example, "My daughter appears happy in all aspects" or, "He enjoys all aspects of junior school life." Two other aspects which received slight mention were the film club (2) and the reference library (2).

Undoubtedly the most uniform and positive response from the parents came in relation to the question upon the amount and kind of work encountered in the junior department. There was overwhelming agreement (83%) that the pupils faced a far greater amount of work in the junior department.

Question

Do you feel that there is any change in the kind and amount of work your child is now doing compared to the work he or she did at infant level?

Answers

"He would appear to be doing more work in a formal situation and less play."

"There is a greater volume of work which she also finds far more stimulating."

About 25% felt the work had not only increased in quantity but also in difficulty:

"Yes there is more work and harder work but that is to be expected."

Nevertheless, for at least five of the parents, the work was still not of a sufficiently high standard.

"The work appears slightly more taxing than that in the infant department but not sufficiently taxing to academically stretch the child."

"Clearly there is more work but he is still not pushed enough."

Three parents felt that, in relation to the amount of work their children were being called upon to face in the juniors, more preparation could have been achieved in the final infant year.

"I think many parents felt that the third year infant children were marking time rather than continuing the progress of the first two years. It has been said that in the juniors they had work to make up - particularly number."

In response to the question about teaching methods 25% of the parents admitted a total lack of knowledge about this area.

Question

Do you feel that the teaching methods employed in the junior department are different in any way from those employed in the junior department?

Answers

"I have insufficient knowledge of these to answer the question."

"I don't know enough about it to be able to comment - I wonder if I am alone in feeling so ignorant of what my child is actually learning at school?"

Another 20% felt there was no difference in the approaches adopted by the infant and junior teachers respectively.

"Not that I'm aware of."

"Not as far as my son is aware."

In general, parents who felt they perceived some difference in the junior teaching methods (some 25%) emphasised the more traditional, formal approaches of the junior department as opposed to those of the infants.

"Yes I think a more formal method is applied and also she has to get on on her own on some occasions."

"Appears to be more disciplined and result-orientated re traditional schooling."

A small number of parents added a note of criticism to their comments. Two raised the question of tables which would, perhaps, be of concern to them because of the weekly test.

"It interests me that, although the children seem expected to know their tables for the Friday test, they are not taught in class. I am happy to be expected to supplement basic things like tables but wonder why there is no complementary drill in class?"

"The learning of tables, I feel, should be commenced in the last year of the infants and should be recited by the class every day so that they will remain in their heads for ever."

Although admitting to progress, two parents felt obliged to point out that this may not have been a direct result of the transfer itself.

"More progress is being made but this may be due to the fact that there has been homework and parents may then give some help."

"I think her reading has improved a great deal, but that this is not due to her transfer but rather that she has just grasped what reading is all about and this resulted in greater progress in every field."

Only one parent made a clear cut response to the effect that their child's rate of progress had slowed down dramatically and this arose on the questionnaire that was critical throughout. An examination of the questionnaire would seem to suggest that the source of both the pupils' apparent lack of progress and the parents dissatisfaction, was the initial separation from friends as a result of the transfer.

Question 1

How do you feel your child has settled into his or her new class?

Answer

"Not as well as we expected because none of his friends from his previous classes have moved into the class with him."

Question 2

What aspects, if any, of junior school life have made your child anxious over the past three months?

Answer

"As above, he has not got his friends with him, he is also sat with naughty boys which he finds disturbing"

Not surprisingly, when asked finally about possible improvements to the handling of the transfer this parent responded:-

"I feel that it is important that social groups of friends are kept together wherever reasonably possible."

The question regarding how parents felt their children had settled into their new junior class produced an even more generalised set of responses than the question upon teaching methods. Upon sixteen of the twenty six questionnaires, the response was simply: "well", "quite well" or "very well." Clearly, the majority of parents, some 80%, were pleased with the way their children had settled into their new class. However, in the absence of any attempt to monitor the adjustment of pupils over a period of time, this particular part of the questionnaire could, perhaps, have been rephrased to encourage parents to reflect and respond on the process of this adjustment over the early stages of the transfer. Certainly, some parents were aware of stages of development in their child's adjustment.

Question

How do you feel your child has settled into his or her new junior class?

Answers

"Initially there were signs of strain and she was physically tired but by this stage of the term she has fully adjusted."

"Quite well now but at first she was very unhappy."

Moreover, that the process of adjustment was not as rapidly achieved as most parents intimated, was possibly indicated by the fact that more than half the parents admitted to some anxiety on the part of their children over various aspects of junior school life. The main sources of anxiety would seem to have been aspects of the new work in general (35%) and the weekly tests (20%).

Question

What aspects, if any, of junior school life have made your child anxious over the past two months?

Answers

"Some of the work, new types of sums and having to learn tables. It took him a little while to get used to the idea of working more on his own."

"The standard of work is more difficult than previously. The prospect of tests."

"Tests on Fridays particularly during the first weeks and also being split up from her friends."

Mathematics was the aspect of work singled out as provoking most anxiety. Other causes of anxiety mentioned included, the absence of friends (2), the school bus (2), names on clothes (1) and the lack of freedom to go to the toilet at anytime (1).

When asked finally what suggestions they had of ways in which the school could improve its handling of the transfer, parental reactions were divided. Approximately half of the parents offered suggestions as to how improvements might be achieved, the most popular of which was better preparation for the transfer during the pupils' final year in the infant department.

Question

From the experience you have had of your child's transfer from the infant to the junior department, how do you feel the school could improve its handling of the transfer?

Answers

"By making the work at the end of the infants a little more like the work in the early stages of the juniors."

"By expecting more of the children in the 3rd year infants, possibly giving them work to learn and occasionally having class tests."

"7-a-day seemed a very big jump and worried my daughter at first. They should have started them off in the previous year on 5 or 6-a-day to get used to these type of sums."

Not surprisingly, five parents raised the question of the separation of friends - with one parent highlighting the particular problem in this respect of the one group of first year juniors who had first sitting for their midday meal.

"Apart from keeping the same children together in a class I have no suggestions."

"I think very few parents realise what changes there will be, and some talk from one of the staff would be most helpful towards the end of the summer term. I also think it is a pity that one class of juniors has to have dinner with the infants as it results in them having a long playtime without their friends. This caused great problems for me as my daughter's friends were all in other classes and she was most unhappy for the first five or six weeks. Now she seems to have lost touch with all her old friends."

Two parents felt that a fore-knowledge of their junior class would be an advantage while one felt a breakdown of the vertical grouping system would help, particularly on an individual level, and that the tests could be followed up more purposefully. In making the assessment that about half of the parents were satis-

fied with the school's handling of the transfer, it was assumed that the 25% who made no comment to this question did so because they had no suggestions to make. In addition to those parents, a further 22% made no suggestions, but commented upon the successful handling of the transfer by the school in relation to their child.

"Is any improvement necessary? It seems to me it is done very well as it is."

"As ---- showed no change, I assume the transfer went smoothly for him"

Moreover, two parents used their response to question what they considered was the whole basis of the questionnaire.

"I can't really see why the transfer should be considered so significant: the children have continuity of place and companions and I think they are well able to cope with the extra half hour on the day by their age."

"I feel that this questionnaire presupposes a gulf between the infant and junior department which, in my opinion, does not and should not exist. I regard --- as one school. Where there are separate heads, problems certainly could exist but this should not be the case at ---"

Despite their criticism of the questionnaire in this way it is, perhaps, interesting to note that these two parents were amongst the lengthiest questionnaires in terms of written response.

B. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Paul L_ (Mother only)

Although Paul had moved classes without any friends accompanying him and, as yet, had made, "no definite new friends," Mrs L felt this had caused Paul no problems. He seemed to be popular and returned to his old friends at playtimes. Paul

had not mentioned any second years at all. Mrs. L made no mention at all of teachers apart from stating that Paul found the idea of having a male teacher "quite different " although she was unable to qualify this any further. In relation to the vertically-grouped situation, Mrs. L felt Paul was "managing all right" and that this organisation was not "detrimental academically " for him. The only aspect that Paul found disturbing was the class topic work which all pupils did together and of which Paul could not see the point. Paul's mother felt that there were no aspects of infant life which he had missed and that football and individual topic work were the aspects of junior life that appealed to him most.

Although Mrs. L felt it was too difficult to judge whether there was any difference in the levels of work between the infants and juniors, she certainly felt he was doing a lot more work. In particular, she highlighted 7-a-day, topic work and the preparation for weekly tests as indications of this extra work. Moreover, he was called upon to work at home which she felt was a very good idea. The only difference in approach she had noticed was the tendency in this junior class for letting the child choose and organise some of the work himself and this she felt was good. Despite this extra work, however, Mrs. L felt that Paul's rate of progress was unchanged and mirrored his previous rate in the infant classes.

According to Mrs. L, Paul had not exhibited any apparent worries about school since transferring to the juniors. Even on the night before his return to school she felt he was uncon-

cerned. He had been aware of the tests and anxious to do well because, "He wants to be not just good, but to do everything right," but had never worried about them overtly. Paul had well settled in by now and the only improvement Mrs. L thought could be made in relation to the transfer was a foreknowledge of the junior classes before the end of the summer term.

John R. (Father and Mother)

John's parents equated the fact that they thought he had settled in "reasonably well" with the fact that some of his friends transferred with him and, accordingly, they were able to recreate their friendship group. He was, however, disappointed that one particular friend did not transfer with him. They felt that, in the days leading up to the return to school, he had been more concerned about who would be in his class rather than who his teacher would be. In relation to John's teacher, both parents were both explicitly and implicitly critical of Mr. E, whom they obviously felt had not understood some of John's difficulties, and contrasted Mr. E somewhat unfavourably with his previous teacher, Mrs. A.

Mr. and Mrs. R had somewhat mixed feelings about the vertically-grouped nature of the class. They were aware that the 2nd years felt they were far superior to the 1st years and acted accordingly towards them. Academically, they felt vertical grouping resulted in John having to work harder and that this was beneficial to him as, being the youngest in the class (August born), he was inclined to be immature. On the

other hand, they felt that vertical grouping must be detrimental for the 2nd years unless they needed extra help. In their comments on vertical grouping, John's parents made reference to the fact that John's teacher recognised him quite incorrectly, as being lazy, a point to which they kept referring throughout the interview.

The only aspect of junior school life that Mr. and Mrs. R felt particularly appealed to John was football which he "quite enjoys." However, they felt he missed a number of aspects of infant life.

"He misses the free periods - the activities - and is aware of the other class having more activity. He still misses the milk and feels under more pressure. He misses Mrs. A and realises now how much he enjoyed her."

Both parents felt that the work in the juniors was more "varied academically" and that much more effort was expected of the pupils. In terms of approach Mr. R felt it was more "scholastic" and cited the "bringing in of the headteacher" as an example of this. However, he was more specific in relation to the question regarding any changes in John's rate of progress.

"He has certainly improved in number recently but initially he found the work very confusing. There has been some deterioration in his handwriting but his reading has shown some general improvement."

Although John's parents felt he could conceal his anxieties by developing a "hardness on the surface", they felt that problems with number work had caused him some initial anxiety in his new situation. They were, as indicated, particularly critical of the teacher in this respect whom they felt had not appreciated his lack of understanding and merely written John off as lazy.

"He had the problem of being identified as lazy e.g. over 7-a-day work but rather it was a problem of understanding and he didn't like it anyway. He is a late developer in terms of number and new areas cause difficulty. Now he is bringing this work home and this is a help in our view, and especially good for him because it is increasing his confidence."

Overall, John's parents gave the impression they had reservations about the way the transfer had turned out for John, particularly in relation to his new teacher. However, in relation to the transfer generally they felt the only improvement that could be made was a fore-knowledge of the new junior class, although even this they admitted could result in the child worrying if he was going to be with a teacher to whom, "he was not partial."

Helen P. - (Mother only)

The post-transfer interview with Helen's mother contrasted sharply with the pre-transfer interview. Following the transfer, Mrs. P felt there had been a deterioration in both Helen's attitude to work and her behaviour at home. Moreover, it was clear that she felt that significant factors in this deterioration were the fact that Helen had been separated from her friends and had failed as yet to establish a satisfactory relationship with either the class teacher (Mr. E) or the headteacher. Mrs. P's concern over the loss of friends was reflected in her attitude towards vertical grouping for she felt that, "all must have been affected by the split of friends into three classes." For Helen particularly this organisation had been of no advantage at all and was, perhaps, the reason

for some of the traits she was exhibiting:

"I wouldn't say it has done her any good at all. Her behaviour in every way at home has deteriorated. She has a sudden cockiness - is it with being with the older children in school? In terms of her table position in class she is now enjoying entertaining and distracting the others, perhaps because she is now better than some of them. I know there is difficulty with some in the class for the teacher."

Helen's mother felt the only aspect of junior life Helen enjoyed was, "coming home on the bus!" According to Helen being a junior was, "awfully hard because there is a lot of work to do!" Mrs. P felt that Helen had been upset by the, "whole change in routine," that had been effected by the transfer and that she missed the routine and atmosphere of the infants:

"It has become much more serious and responsible. Helen misses the freer atmosphere. She is relaxed in her relationship with the teacher but anxious generally. She is afraid of the headteacher image - everything builds up to the test."

Helen's mother had very little comment to make in relation to either work or teaching methods. She felt that Helen was being asked to do more work on her own, that it was harder and that all reading seemed to be done at home as far as she could ascertain. Mrs. P had not noticed any difference in the teaching methods used. However, asked about a possible change in Helen's rate of progress she felt there had been a considerable deterioration all round.

"She's more slapdash in her approach to her work. She makes more mistakes in her work done at home, missing out words and having a 'doesn't really matter' approach. There has been a tremendous change in her. She is not working half as hard and she is panicking at times which is a new trait in her, unlike my other daughter."

Clearly, Helen had not settled in at all as readily as Mrs. P

had anticipated and she cited as evidence of this lack of adjustment the "weird illnesses" that Helen apparently feigned. "Sore throats which I'm not sure are real or imaginary. Limps of illnesses for which there appear to be no reason." These, together with the way Helen, "comes home and throws herself into the house," were clear evidence to her mother that Helen was far from settled in her new class. The Friday tests, in particular, had become a "big ordeal" for Helen and preparation for these was accompanied by a great deal of anxiety. Not surprisingly, Mrs. P's perception of the transfer was that it was, "more than just a moving up, it was a change of system, a change of routine." The way in which the school could most improve its handling of the transfer was to avoid the separation of friends - "they were doing very nicely - it was needless to split them up in this way." In addition, she felt the headteacher could be more in evidence in the infant classes and so avoid the "confrontation" inherent in the testing situation. Finally, he could be far more sociable to the pupils during the initial tests so, "Fridays would not be so gruesome!"

Sarah F (Mother only)

Mrs. F felt Sarah had settled in far better than she had ever imagined possible and this was due largely to both her class teacher, Miss C, and to the efforts of the peripatetic Schools' Remedial Reading Teacher. The vertically-grouped situation had been advantageous because Sarah was used to older children at home and the 2nd years seemed to be "mothering" her.

Although Sarah had, "no bosom pals as it were," she was very happy socially within the class. Academically, it was no problem for Sarah because she was working independently anyway. Despite her own lack of ability, one of the aspects of junior life Sarah enjoyed was the competition and especially the awareness that, in some things, there were children behind her. Sarah also enjoyed having homework and had really discovered for the first time the joy of reading library books. In terms of the infants, Mrs. F, felt that Sarah probably missed the teachers and the younger children most of all.

Sarah's mother felt there was a significant change in the kind and amount of work she was doing in the juniors.

"She is doing more work and has advanced dramatically this year in reading, mathematics and in getting her own thoughts down herself. Before she had spoken to the teacher and copied. She seems to be able to work things out for herself better. She had discovered library books and reads them. It has all started to happen this year - I feel something has clicked."

There was also a change in the approach adopted by the teacher.

"The teacher uses a more organised, more structured and generally more grown up approach in her teaching."

Because of this change in approach and because of the efforts of the Remedial Reading Teacher, "a way of teaching Sarah required," Mrs. F. believed that Sarah's rate of progress had speeded up dramatically and that new doors had opened for her which hitherto had been closed.

Apart from some initial concern when faced with the prospect of the peripatetic teacher and some aggression which had surfaced, Sarah had shown no anxiety at all in relation to her new situation. She had settled in "tremendously well " and

had never been unwilling to go to school. Accordingly, Mrs. F argued that no improvement was necessary in relation to the school's handling of the transfer.

Jean G. (Mother only)

It was clear from the interview with Joan's mother that the undoubted success of the transfer from her point of view lay in the approach of Joan's new teacher, Mrs. D. Mrs. G contrasted the discipline she felt Mrs. B had over the pupils. Moreover, she felt that Joan appreciated this discipline and particularly, "knowing where she stands with a teacher." Although she admitted she was previously worried about the vertical grouping, Mrs. G felt it was working well academically in relation to Joan. Socially, Joan did not have so many friends as a result of the transfer and had recently had some difficulty in deciding whom she could invite to a party because of this! Joan had formed no friendships with any second years.

According to her mother, Joan did not miss anything from her previous experience in the infants but, as a junior, particularly enjoyed games and working with older pupils. The main difference Mrs. G saw in terms of work was in relation to Mathematics. There was, clearly, more of it and to a more difficult level. This had, perhaps, made the biggest impression because it was not Joan's favourite subject. Mrs. G had not noticed any difference at all in relation to language work and, in general, had not been aware of any differences in approach or methodology on the part of the teacher. In terms of progress, Joan was finding Mathematics more difficult than previously and

Mrs. G felt that possibly Joan considered she could be doing better in this area.

The only anxiety that Joan had demonstrated since the transfer had been in relation to the knowledge of the multiplication tables that had been required of her. Other than this, she had shown no worries at all about school and her mother felt she had fully adjusted to the new class after only two weeks. Finally, the only aspect of the transfer that Mrs. G felt could be improved was the pupils' lack of knowledge of their impending class. Knowing this, she felt, would give them one less thing to worry about.

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS POST-TRANSFER

SUMMARY

The problems associated with the questionnaire in the sampling of pre-transfer perceptions were obviously mirrored in the post-transfer situation. For example, there was more evidence of pupil consultation by parents and there was still some confusion over the meanings of questions. However, there was a considerable increase in the number of questionnaires returned and the general level of response in terms of content.

Overall, the responses on the questionnaires, with only one or two exceptions, were generally positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the children's introduction to the juniors. In contrast, the interviews produced far less harmony. Of the five interviews two were marked by the obvious dissatisfaction of the parents, two by a marked satisfaction and one which came down on neither side! This may well have been the result of the individual circumstances of the pupils involved in the interview situations or it may have been due to the extra probing possible in an interview.

In personal terms, what emphasis there was upon significant individuals was placed upon pupil friendships and there was comparatively little reference to teachers in the responses - except where criticism was involved. This emphasis was reflected in the responses concerned with vertical grouping where the social aspects of this organisation found considerably less support than the academic. Apart again from those few instances

where parents felt their children had not settled into the juniors, there was very little interest in looking back to the pupils' infant days and aspects of infant life they might be missing. Those aspects of junior life which parents generally felt were most appealing to their children were the wider curriculum, games and the increased status.

There was widespread agreement among parents that their children were being faced with a good deal more work as a result of the transfer. However, there was very little knowledge among parents regarding the content or level of difficulty of the work faced by pupils or of the teaching approaches adopted. In general most parents felt their children's rate of progress had increased as a result of the transfer.

Most parents felt their children had settled well into their new junior class by the time their perceptions were sampled although there were indications that anxiety had been displayed at times by most pupils, especially in relation to work and the weekly tests. The interviews particularly gave an insight into the different ways pupils were seen to adjust to their new situation. Finally, over half of the parents felt the school's handling of the transfer was satisfactory. Of the suggestions for improvement that were made, the most common was a fore-knowledge of the class followed by the non-separation of friends and more preparation at infant level.

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFER

DISCUSSION

Both sets of perceptions underlined the limited knowledge parents had of what went on in school. Certainly the parents felt on much firmer ground in the post-transfer situation as, perhaps, the added response indicated but, in terms of a knowledge of the curriculum their children were following or the teaching methods employed, there was little difference in their perceptions.

Most parents saw the transfer as a significant stage in their children's educational career. In particular, they saw it as marking the end of 'play activities' and the commencement of more formal direct instructional teaching with more clearly defined subject areas. Perhaps as a result of this, they envisaged that amongst the most attractive aspects of junior school life would be the increased status offered, the harder work and the opportunities it would present for more competition. According to the questionnaire responses in particular, it would appear that, for most parents, these expectations were validated in the post-transfer situation by the visible amount of extra work with which their children were faced. However, in their post-transfer perceptions of what their children most enjoyed about junior life the emphasis was placed, perhaps more realistically, on the wider curriculum and particular subject areas rather than harder work and competition! However, this emphasis upon competition was, perhaps, not entirely lost in the post-transfer

situation. The movement slightly in favour of the vertically-grouped organisation in the parents' post-transfer perceptions - at least in academic terms - may well have been due to the challenge parents saw in their children having to compete with, or at least keep up with, the older second years in the class. Socially, those parents in particular of children separated from friends as a result of the transfer were strongly against the vertically-grouped organisation, while a number of parents also supported the view that the older children tended to be somewhat dominating and, perhaps, disruptive. Overall, despite the mellowing of some on the academic side in their post-transfer perceptions, most parents were against this form of class organisation.

While the pre and post-transfer perceptions of parents were fairly consistent in relation to the degree of emphasis placed upon the significance of pupil friendships in relation to the transfer, this was not true in relation to the significance placed upon teachers. In contrast to the pre-transfer perceptions, there was little mention of teachers in the post-transfer situation. This may well have been due to the short time the pupils had spent with their new teacher and the parents' limited knowledge of the teacher. Alternatively, it may have been a reflection of the anxiety parents felt before transfer about who their child's next teacher would be - an anxiety which would have little point after the transfer.

The majority of parents felt that, as anticipated, their children had not only settled readily into their new situation but that their rate of school progress had, in most cases

increased. However, there was also evidence to suggest that the settling in of pupils did have a more developmental perspective to it for a number of pupils and that many pupils were at times anxious, as a result of the extra work rate required and in connection with the weekly tests.

The interviews with selected parents produced two most striking contrasts between pre and post-transfer perceptions. Of these, perhaps the most surprising was that with Helen's mother. The supreme confidence with which Mrs. P had viewed the transfer in relation to her daughter was totally absent in the post-transfer situation when it was clear that her mother felt she had not adjusted well and that her attitude, behaviour and work had deteriorated as a result of the transfer. On the other hand, the misgivings which Sarah's mother had in relation to the timing of the transfer for Sarah were totally dispelled in the post-transfer situation. Not only had Sarah adjusted readily but, in Mrs. F's view, was undergoing a 'surge' in her progress academically. Moreover, in the attempt to try to explain these contrasts both parents alluded to the significance of individuals in their child's adjustment or lack of adjustment. Helen's mother, for example, pointed out the separation of Helen from friends and the difficulty she was having in adjusting to her new teacher and especially the headteacher, while Sarah's mother highlighted the contribution of Miss C and the remedial teacher and the fact that she was enjoying being 'mothered' by the older pupils in the class. Although not to the same extent as Helen's, John's parents also appeared to feel that the transfer had not gone as well for him as they anticipated and they

were particularly critical of the teacher in this respect. For Joan's mother the issue of the transfer appeared to be dominated by the issue of the discipline of the teacher and for her the success of the transfer for Joan lay in the more disciplinarian approach of teacher D. Despite some misgivings about Joan's progress in Mathematics, Mrs. G felt that Joan had adjusted as readily as anticipated to the transfer. Finally, Paul's mother saw the transfer as basically unproblematical for him as she had envisaged, although she admitted he was most anxious to do well in the tests. For Mrs. L the transfer was a, "new class, rather than new environment."

In spite of the inherent weaknesses present in the two data collecting techniques employed, their use went some way in fulfilling the aims of this aspect of the research. The questionnaires more particularly in the post-transfer situation enabled a fairly wide level of opinion to be sampled, while the interviews gave the opportunity for a close comparison of the pre and post-transfer perceptions of individual parents, based upon their hopes for and the experiences of their children. The two methods of data collection obviously produced some differences as well as similarities. Perhaps the most interesting was the changes in attitudes across the transfer as recorded by the respective techniques. While before transfer the questionnaire responses tended to be forthright, critical and uncompromising, after transfer they were generally supportive. In contrast, the interview responses, which formerly were more idealistic and supportive, contained more elements of criticism in the post-transfer situation.

THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS TEACHERS AND PARENTS

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The discussion of the data gained from the three groups' perceptions will be divided into two parts. In the first, we shall set out to compare the data gained from the groups in relation to the theoretical perspective adopted by the researcher. In the second, the findings of this research will be considered in relation to previous research, not only on the subject of transfer generally, but also other related topics.

Part 1

A comparison of the perceptions of the three groups underlines the extent to which each group defined certain situations in its own terms. This was particularly evident in the pre-transfer perceptions of pupils and parents where a great deal of projection and, accordingly, guesswork were required. For example, parental expectations that pupils would relish the increased level of work and competition which they felt would accompany the transfer were not shared by the pupils who were concerned with much more basic aspects of school life. In this area of the pre-transfer perceptions the teachers' views were generally closer to those of the pupils than were the parents, although the often idiosyncratic nature of the pupils' perceptions perhaps underlined their originality. In the post-transfer situation, however, there was a closer affinity between parents' and pupils' perceptions than between teachers' and pupils' perceptions. Parental perceptions were clearly more sympathetically

and realistically based upon the pupils' experiences, rather than on their own ideals. Thus the stress upon the attraction of competition and harder work was modified to an attestation of the advantages of the wider curriculum. In contrast, the teachers were less sympathetic to some of the anxieties and difficulties indicated by both pupils and parents. Their views on vertical grouping were not shared by most pupils or parents, neither did they place anywhere near the same significance upon pupil friendships to the success of the transfer as did the other two groups. These differences between the perceptions of the groups at the two respective stages of the research can, perhaps, be seen as a validation of the theoretical perspective, adopted in the approach to the research. The key to their understanding would seem to lie in the nature and development of the interactions within and between the groups. Accordingly, the pupils in the post-transfer situation were much more likely to communicate their difficulties, anxieties and views to parents than to their relatively new and unfamiliar teachers. On the other hand, the teachers, pre-transfer, had the advantage of some inside knowledge of the school and its members and a longer relationship with the pupils. The distinctive aspects of the respective groups' perceptions can also, perhaps, be seen as a result of their respective interaction experiences. Pupil perceptions, for example, significantly reflected their interactions with older pupils, via brothers and sisters or friends' brothers and sisters. Similarly, the affinity between teachers' viewpoints despite considerable differences in personality, experience

and age can perhaps, be explained, in part, by their experiences of interaction with similar groups and individuals within their working environment.

The significance of the general interactionist perspective with which the research was approached can, perhaps, also be seen in the extent to which the respective groups, albeit with different emphases, defined the transfer in personal terms. Parental pre-transfer perceptions were especially noteworthy in this respect, stressing their view of the importance of the teacher and, to a lesser extent, the maintenance of pupil friendships to the success of the transfer. However, this point of view was not shared by the pupils who, in general, failed to predict those problems which could arise as a result of the separation of friends and who placed significantly less stress upon the importance of junior teachers in the context of the transfer. The reality of the transfer demonstrated the significance broken or maintained friendships had upon the pupils' adjustment to their new situation was revealed in both their and their parents' perceptions, although it was not accorded the same level of importance by the junior teachers. On the other hand, the parental emphasis upon the significance of the teacher which characterised pre-transfer perceptions, was markedly lacking in most parents' post-transfer perceptions, a feature which, as already indicated, may well have been the result of a limited knowledge of the new teacher or the fact that, once the transfer was accomplished, speculation upon a teacher's ability or lack of it was pointless. Pupil post-transfer perceptions revealed an awareness of the advantages

and disadvantages of being taught by respective junior teachers but indicated that the loyalty to the infant teachers attested before transfer had not fully materialised in their new situation in relation to their new teacher.

The question of pupils' personal relationships with their peers and teachers illustrates the developmental perspective to interactionist theory highlighted by Glaser and Strauss. The limitation of the research in terms of data collection to only two points in time meant this perspective could not be effectively explored. However, there were a number of indications of such a development in the perceptions of the three groups. In addition to the development of relationships between teachers and pupils and parents and pupils, there was evidence that the pupils' awareness of the transfer increased as the time for the return to school drew near. A developmental perspective was also clearly hinted in pupils', teachers' and parents' perceptions of the pupils' adjustment to their new classes. Moreover, parental perceptions underwent some significant modification across the transfer as a result of their children's actual experience.

This developmental perspective is also inherent in the interactionist concept of, "career", which was isolated as, perhaps, having particular relevance to this research. In this respect, the perceptions of the groups generally recognised the transfer as a significant stage in the status passage of the pupils through their primary school careers. In the pupils' and parents' pre-transfer perceptions the transition was clearly associated with a rise in status. The pupils especially associated the transfer with an observable increase in their status,

although they experienced difficulty in articulating those aspects of the transfer which gave rise to the increased status. Certainly, they saw the juniors as having a higher status than themselves and perhaps, in this respect, the essential factor was the label "junior," if not simply age. Parental perceptions saw the pupils enjoying the increased status which accompanied the transfer, but for reasons more in tune with their own views on junior education. Clearly, the parents, themselves, saw the transfer as a significant stage in their children's educational career. For them it marked the cessation of play activities and the commencement of education according to their definition which was essentially in formal, teacher-centred terms and in clearly defined subject areas. In the absence of other sources of information, it can, perhaps, only be assumed that the parents arrived at such a definition from their own experiences of education and possibly media coverage of critical attitudes towards informal approaches in education and their apparent effect upon current educational standards. Perhaps not surprisingly, the infant teachers did not stress this idea of the transfer being associated with a rise in status to the same extent as either pupils or parents. The post-transfer situation saw some reversal of these positions. The advantages and enjoyment of the extra status gained by the pupils as a result of the transfer were really only underlined by the junior teachers. The parents and particularly the pupils made surprisingly little mention of this aspect of the transfer. For the pupils, as has already been argued, this may well have been due to the fact that, once attained, a certain level of status no longer holds an attraction.

Rather a concern with the next stage in one's career becomes all important. On the other hand, it may well have been the effect of being in a class situation dominated by an older group. Although the parents made significantly less mention of the pupils' awareness of the rise in status following the transfer, it was implicit in their perceptions that the rise in status they anticipated in educational terms was generally effected. The increased amount of work, the more formal approaches and the feeling of many that their children's rate of progress had increased appeared to satisfy most parents that the transfer represented a significant stage in their children's educational career.

Another concept highlighted by Glaser and Strauss which it was felt was worth considering in relation to this research was that of "awareness." This too, however, has a developmental perspective which the limitations of this research to two data collecting points made it impossible to really follow through. However, the research did illuminate some interesting aspects of this concept in relation to the three groups involved. For example, the very limited awareness of the pupils regarding the transfer at the first data-collecting stage was striking. Certainly, the pupils six weeks before the end of term had very little interest in it or knowledge of what it entailed. This "closed awareness." may well have been the result of the teachers' and, perhaps, school's lack of interest in preparing them, or their age and consequent limited curiosity in what might appear to them to be the distant future. Towards the end of the summer holiday, however, as they and their parents

pointed out, this disinterest gave way to some excitement, anticipation and anxiety, particularly because of their ignorance regarding their new teacher and classroom. Perhaps even more surprising was the infant teachers' admitted limited awareness of what went on in the lower junior classes, despite teaching at the school for a number of years. For a number of parents the research served to highlight their lack of knowledge regarding the school and some expressed frustration at this. In the post-transfer situation the parents were much better informed about certain aspects of school life and this may well have been due to the interest aroused by the research itself.

The question of the parents' lack of information regarding what went on in school, perhaps, leads naturally to a consideration of the concept of 'negotiation' and 'symbolic power' in relation to this research. The limited information the school gave to parents regarding organisation and curriculum, is, perhaps, an example of the school's power in its dealings with parents. On the other hand, it could be argued that the school responded to the pressures of an articulate middle class catchment area by its generally formal approach, while individual teachers were able to give examples of the pressures they felt from parents. Although the concept of "negotiation" is basically a metaphorical one, the teachers were able to give examples of explicit bargaining situations with their pupils and one can, perhaps, assume that implicit negotiations were, therefore, also present in the classroom situation, despite the age of the pupils. The apparent int-

ransigence of the two groups of teachers in their admitted failure to provide more co-ordination across the transfer was possibly a further example of the symbolic power held by each of the two groups in their self-identified roles as infant and junior teachers. Neither group seemed willing to compromise its own identity by going out of its way to openly create more co-ordination between the infant and junior classes. Another interesting aspect of the awareness variable was the lack of interest in, or knowledge of, some of the problems faced by the pupils on the part of the junior teachers. Given that the teachers themselves favoured the vertically-grouped organisation which led to such problems and that, from experience, they probably realised that such difficulties would-given time-subside, their attitude in this respect perhaps reflected a one sided version of the 'pretence' stage of awareness isolated by Glaser and Strauss.

Although emphasising the interactionist theoretical perspective in relation to this research, our preliminary survey of literature also allowed for a consideration of the role of the structural context of the research. Indeed, in deference to this, the school setting of the research was examined in some detail and questions raised about the impact of particular aspects of it. In this respect, the question of the vertically-grouped junior organisation was raised and it was evident from the data gained that this had a significant bearing upon both the transfer and the groups' perception of it. The transfer of pupils from two to three classes perhaps increased both parents and pupils concern over the identity of the next teacher.

The separation of friends, where it occurred, was seen as a result of this organisation and the perceptions of parents and pupils regarding vertical grouping reflected this. Parents were also concerned about the ability of teachers to cope with two age groups while the pupils generally appeared to resent the presence of the older second years who appeared to undermine their newly-acquired status. In contrast, the junior teachers, for whom the organisation was appealing in relation to the uncertainty and inequality they felt had pertained before, were greatly in favour of it and showed little concern for the problems some pupils faced as a result, for example, of the separation of friends. The organisation of particular classes and the location of classrooms also appeared to influence pupils' perceptions. The differences in the location and sizes of the two infant classes, for example, appeared to bring out some contrasts in both the responses and nature of the responses in the pupils. Teacher B's class were more inclined to conflicting viewpoints in group discussions and had developed some wariness regarding teacher D because they often heard her shouting next door. The similarity between teachers' perceptions despite differences in personality, age, experience etc. has already been attributed in part, to their interactions within the school, but the organisation of the school and the limitations, demands and pressures placed upon them as a result of this organisation must surely require additional consideration. Delamont (1976 p.35f) argues the need to consider not only the wider setting locally but also nationally. Locally, the organisation of the area in terms of a selective system of secondary

education would seem to have impinged considerably upon some of the perceptions sampled in the research. Parental anticipation of the transfer from a play-centred to a more formal curriculum may well have been influenced by this as, perhaps, was the pressure the junior teachers felt under in relation to the demands required of the newly-transferred pupils. On a wider note, the space given in the media to criticism of informal methods of education may well have influenced the parents in their definition of what junior education should be.

Both individually and comparatively, the perceptions of the three groups would appear to go some way to validating the theoretical perspective outlined as a result of our survey of research. There was some evidence to support each of the concepts isolated, although the findings of the research were not always consistent across the transfer. It was, perhaps, in those concepts which had a developmental perspective that there was insufficient data available, largely due to the limited sampling arrangement.

Having thus appraised the data gained from the three groups in relation to our theoretical outline, we now turn to consider how some of the results of this research relate to previous research findings.

Part 2

In the context of research into transfer generally, this study is, perhaps unique in its concern with such young pupils and such an early transfer stage. Equally, its limitation to

transfer within a school sets it apart from most other research. Moreover, a great deal of transfer-related research has been concerned with the question of the appropriate age for various transfer situations - a consideration which was generally absent from this research. However, despite the unusual nature of this research in these ways, some of the findings, nevertheless, can be seen to accord with aspects of other research. For example, the insularity between schools involved in a transfer situation attested by Blyth (1965) and Ginsburg and Meyenn (1980), was evident between the two groups of teachers, infant and junior, at Fairtree. The infant teachers, particularly, admitted to a limited knowledge of what pertained in the juniors, although, like those teachers in Ginsburg and Meyenn's research, they had perceptions and attitudes to express. The influence of older, already transferred pupils upon the perceptions of those about to transfer has been indicated in previous studies (e.g. Galton and Delamont 1980, Leake 1982 unpublished) and it was clear in this research that older pupils provided much of the information for the infant pupils' perceptions. However, the information gained by the infant pupils in this research appeared to be of a less intimidatory nature than that found in research concerned with older pupils. There were no expectations of bullying, for example, and allied folklore concepts such as "Boot Hill" (Leake op.cit.), although it is clear that in many cases the older juniors had tried to be off-putting by stressing "the harder work," "the stricter teachers" and the weekly tests which the newly-transferred pupils would face.

Although the infant pupils had no expectations of being bullied by the older second year juniors, anticipating rather friendly relationships, there was evidence to suggest the reality of the transfer did indeed produce some intimidation of the first years, particularly by second year boys. This disparity between expectation and reality and the role it played in pupils' adjustment to a new situation was highlighted by Galton and Delamont (1980) and further examples in this research are to be found, perhaps, in Joan's expectations of Teacher D and Helen's expectations of the transfer generally. Another aspect of this disparity was of course also seen in relation to parental expectations - as in the case of Helen's and Joan's parents.

By the time that the second part of the research was undertaken most pupils felt that they had adjusted to their new situation and preferred being a junior to being an infant. Indeed, only five pupils felt they would prefer to be back in the infants and their reasons for this were hardly significant as Sarah's and Richard's indicate.* In this, our research reflects the finding of Murdoch (1966) that, despite identifiable problems of adjustment, most pupils expressed a preference for their new school after being in it for only six weeks. The fact that the school was in a middle class area and that most pupils had made a satisfactory adjustment by the half-term stage perhaps also supports Nisbet and Entwistle's (1969) findings that children from working class backgrounds are more

* see above pages 88 and 90

likely to be adversely affected by sudden changes at transfer than those from middle class backgrounds.

Finally, in the context of transfer-related research, the categories generated in the pupils' responses in this research were not unlike those identified by Bryan (1980) in his research into Middle School Transfer. Those categories mentioned by Bryan included the age of transfer, material resources, friendship status, the organisation of time and school rules and, of these, only the questions of the age of transfer and school rules were really totally absent from pupils' perceptions in this research.

In addition to the aforementioned links with research into transfer, some of the data gained in the course of this research mirrored the findings of other research into schools. For example, in assessing both sets of interviews with teachers the researcher pointed to the lack of technical language employed by the teachers in their responses.* A similar situation was found by Sharp and Green (1975) who observed how teachers were unable to articulate technically what was involved in a child-centred approach and by Ashton et al (1975) who, in their study of aims, found that the language used by teachers in the expression of aims was simple, everyday rather than technical language. Jackson (1968 p.148) too found teachers, "lacking a technical vocabulary," and sought to explain it in the existential nature of teaching and the emphasis upon practicality. It will be recalled that the researcher felt this situation may have been due to his close relationship with the teachers involved. However, another explanation

*See above pages 107 and 121

might be implicit in the findings of Cane and Schroeder (1970) - namely that half of the teachers they sampled were completely unfamiliar with the research of eleven out of fourteen prominent authors and well over three quarters never saw any of the educational research journals.

In the section concerned with the school setting of this research reference was made to the fact that the classes occupying the workbay areas had, since their inceptions, been taught only by teachers newly-appointed to the school.* In this respect, the situation in the school reflected the findings of Delamont (1976) that preference in the "ownership" and choice of rooms was, more often than not, the prerogative of established teachers. Delamont also highlighted how particular pupils can bring influence to bear upon a teacher by virtue of their background - a situation admitted to by Teacher A in respect of pupils whose parents were lecturers. The other side of the coin is, perhaps, reflected in Sharp and Green's work in which pupils were seen to have been deprived of status by virtue of their background or older siblings' behaviour or lack of ability. Still on the subject of pupil-teacher relationships, the lack of preparation afforded by the infant teachers to their pupils, the differences between some of the teachers' and pupils' perceptions and the lack of concern demonstrated by the junior teachers in relation to some of their pupils' difficulties perhaps reflect Gannaway's (1976 p.46f) assumptions about the inherent differences between teachers and pupils and the reticence teachers have about communicating

* see above p.37

views of education to pupils. It was also evident from the research that the pupils had to adjust far more to their teachers than their teachers to them - an indication of the "symbolic" power of teachers and a reflection of Hargreaves' (1972 p.137) findings. The implicit popularity of Teacher C expressed by the pupils both before and after transfer may well have been, not just an indication of her ability to communicate to the pupils, but also the fact that she was one of the youngest teachers on the staff and Peterson (1968 p.273) in his research found that pupils tended to age-distance teachers.

Upon the subject of teacher relationships, this research illustrated a considerable degree of uniformity of viewpoint between teachers working within the same age group. The importance of other members of staff as a reference group or pressure group in the determination of perspectives has been argued by Lacey (1970), Smith and Geoffrey (1968), Delamont (1976) and Morrison and McIntyre (1973). On the other hand, there was less harmony of viewpoint between the infant and junior teachers respectively. The existence of segmentation and conflict in teachers' attitudes has been found by Rudd and Wiseman (1962), Peterson (1968) and Musgrave and Taylor (1969).

Finally, in the context of parental perceptions, our research indicated the extent to which parents were uninformed about what actually went on in the school. This situation has also been observed by Goodacre (1970 p.51) who noted that, "Parents are ill informed about the responsibilities of the day to day work of teachers." Musgrave and Taylor (1969) and

Sharp and Green (1975) have also alluded to the reticence schools have about giving information to parents. On the other hand, there was, nevertheless, an indication that parental views of education had some influence upon the teachers and school generally, reinforcing, perhaps, the observations of Goodacre (op cit p.59) and Taylor (1968) regarding the greater capacity for impact upon schools that middle class parents have in comparison to working class parents.

As our survey of literature indicated, this research would appear to be without any thoroughgoing parallel. However, as this brief discussion has indicated, the data from the research do reflect other findings in transfer-related research, particularly in relation to the insularity of teaching groups involved in the transfer and pupil expectations of the transfer, both realised and unrealised. Finally, aspects of the research data have also reflected other research findings, not specifically concerned with transfer.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The impetus for this piece of research was the re-organisation of the junior classes at Fairtree Primary School and the consequent highlighting of the infant-junior transfer as an aspect of the total school process worthy of particular attention. In this respect the research would appear to have had some justification, for our enquiries have revealed that this re-organisation, together with more deeply-rooted aspects of the school organisation, have impinged upon this transfer. For example, in terms of the junior re-organisation, the dispersal of pupils between three separate classes and the change from a single age-grouping to a vertically-grouped class would seem to have been particularly significant according to the perceptions of the three groups. Similarly, in relation to other aspects of the school organisation, the lack of curriculum continuity would also appear to have had some bearing upon the groups' perceptions.

Within the microsociological situation of the school, the symbolic interactionist perspective adopted would seem to have gone some way to help provide a key to the understanding of the groups' perceptions. The differences and similarities between the three groups' perceptions across the transfer could, largely, be explained in terms of their respective interaction experiences. The way in which the groups, at different stages and with different emphases, defined the transfer in personal terms also appeared to underline the significance of an interactionist perspective. Moreover, there were indications that interactionist developmental concepts of career, status passage and awareness, as identified particularly by

Glaser and Strauss, were of significance in the interpretation of the perceptions of the three groups across the transfer.

Within the theoretical framework adopted at the outset of the research, attention was also given to the social structural context within which interaction took place. In this respect, the school and its wider community setting were considered as an important preliminary to the understanding of the groups' perceptions. The question to which we must now turn, therefore, is how far, if at all, this specific school situation can be generalised and how is it a reflection of such wider structural considerations? It was claimed in the introduction to this study that the school organisation at Fairtree was typical of the larger primary schools in the area and parallels have already been drawn between some of the findings of this research and other research into transfer, albeit at later stages. More generally, Sharp and Green have emphasized that the "micro-analysis of micro-institutions like schools inter-relate crucially with more macro-institutional features which differentially structure opportunity, resources and power." (1975 p.219) and in their conclusion relate the controls apparent in the classrooms they observed to the socio-economic structure of our society. The distinctiveness of this research in its concern with transfer at seven rather than eleven could, perhaps, be interpreted as another example of this same structure imposing itself upon education. Transfer at eleven and older has become integrally related to the world of work - particularly in the formerly widespread context of selection - and it could be argued

that this relationship has served to underwrite the significance of this later age of transfer. Moreover, such a theme is also developed by Willis (1977) who, moreover, attempts to explain how such a structure actually imposes itself upon individual teenagers.

Both Sharp and Green and Willis were concerned in their research with basically working class situations and class can, perhaps, be seen as another example of a structure intruding into the life of a school. In this respect, the location of the research in a school in an exclusively middle class catchment area would seem to be significant. In particular, one could ask how far the perceptions of parents, especially in relation to their views on competition, their desire for their children to be 'stretched' and what counts as schoolwork can be identified as middle class concerns? The same kind of concerns which obversely led other middle class parents in earlier years to subscribe to A.S.Neill's theory and practice of progressive education. Similarly, the significance placed by parents of pupils at Fairtree on the impending selection procedure could be seen as a predominantly middle-class preoccupation, although ironically it was, perhaps, middle class interests which led originally, in part, to the criticism of eleven plus selection and the emergence of comprehensive education! Certainly, this question of how far the class structure in the selection and allocation of pupils impinges on the early years of education requires further investigation.

Although theoretical considerations are undoubtedly important, the research was also very much concerned with the practical aspects of transfer, as experienced and perceived by the respective groups. The question, therefore, arises as to how the school in question, and indeed any school, could improve its handling of this particular transfer situation? Clearly at Fairtree there was room for improvement in the handling of the transfer in terms of the preparation of the pupils for their new class situation and teacher. At a social level, a foreknowledge of their next class and class teacher and some contact with that teacher in her classroom before the transfer is, perhaps, the least the children should be able to expect. Similarly, a knowledge of future classmates and a re-assurance that close friendships will not be severed would possibly allay the fears that some pupils might have in this respect. At a cognitive level, the co-ordination of curriculum areas and the harmonising of the methods and approaches employed by teachers across the transfer would, perhaps, have made the transfer a much smoother process for all concerned. Given that the weekly test is seen as an essential element in the curriculum of the lower junior pupils, a more sympathetic and structured approach, perhaps involving the class teacher initially rather than the headteacher, would certainly mitigate the anxiety felt by most pupils in relation to this innovation experienced with the onset of junior status. The limited knowledge teachers displayed of what went on in other classes in the school must surely be a cause for concern and suggests the need for a more structured series of staff dis-

cussions upon the whole process of education within the school. In addition, greater opportunities could be found for teachers to visit, assist with or teach other classes in the school, while the teachers could, perhaps, be given more opportunity to be responsible for other age groups within the school, rather than be labelled as an 'infant' or 'reception' teacher. Finally, the lack of knowledge displayed by parents regarding the school generally and its philosophy and approaches should give rise to considerations as to how this gap might be filled and how the parents might be drawn into a closer working relationship with the teachers and the school generally.

In conclusion, the researcher would hope that, although limited, this research has gone some way in illuminating transfer at a stage of schooling previously neglected in research. Moreover, it has been unusual, not only for its concern with transfer within a school, but its location in a school in a middle-class catchment area - when the thrust of so much recent educational research has been in what might be described as deprived, working class situations. The research has, perhaps, demonstrated that the problems often experienced in transfer situations between schools can be found within a school. It has also highlighted the differences and similarities that can exist between various groups' perceptions of a particular aspect of the educational process. In this sense it has, perhaps, gone some way to justifying the essentially interactionist perspective adopted at the outset of the research. Our theoretical perspective, however, allowed for a recognition of the social - structured context in which interaction occurs and this has also been considered and

discussed. Where perhaps the study has been most lacking in relation to the theoretical perspective, is in the ascertainment of any developmental perspective of the groups' perceptions. Certainly, it examined perceptions across the transfer but not in a manner that would have made it possible to follow through the development of perceptions in any thoroughgoing manner. On the other hand, it could be argued that, in the context of research involving such young pupils, any more extensive enquiry would be unethical and impractical because of the tensions and anxieties it could create. Perhaps the main criticism that might be levelled at the research as it stands concerns the employment of three data-collecting techniques: individual interviews, group interviews and questionnaires. Indeed, it could be argued that, enclosed within this one study, are two pieces of research - a survey of groups and a collection of case studies. However, despite this variety of approach, the data gained from the various techniques were, in general, both consistent and complementary. Without the individual sample of six pupils and their parents we should not have been afforded the opportunity of matching parent and pupils' perceptions. Without the information gathered from the questionnaires we should not have sampled the critical attitudes of many parents to the school and, without the group interviews with pupils, we should have lost the corporate information and opportunities for discussion they provided. Moreover, the concern of the research was clearly with description and illumination rather than measurement and deduction. A number of possible

further lines of enquiry are raised as a result of this research. Not least is a related study involving the transfer of pupils between separate infant and junior schools. A long term research programme involving the consideration of pupils through successive stages of transfer during their educational careers might provide some valuable information regarding individual pupils' reactions to successive transfer situations. The question of class structure and its effect upon parental perceptions and schools is clearly a theoretical issue worthy of further investigation, particularly in the context of middle class situations about which there seem to be little evidence. Would Sharp and Green, for example, find the same social controls apparent, although possibly at different levels, in a school setting like Fairtree where largely middle class pupils are taught by middle class teachers? Finally, consideration could be given as to how the developmental perspective of perceptions might be explored, particularly in the context of younger pupils similar to those involved in this research.

APPENDIX I

FATHERS' OCCUPATIONS OF PUPILS
OF FAIRTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

FATHERS' OCCUPATIONS OF PUPILS OF FAIRTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL
GROUPED ACCORDING TO THE HALL-JONES SCALE OF OCCUPATIONAL
PRESTIGE FOR MALES

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>NUMBER OF FATHERS</u>	<u>% AGE</u>
<u>Class 1</u>		
Professionally Qualified and High Administrative	57	25.3%
<u>Class 2</u>		
Managerial and Executive	56	24.8%
<u>Class 3</u>		
Inspectional, Supervisory and Other Non manual (Higher Grade)	88	39.1%
<u>Class 4</u>		
Inspectional, Supervisory and Other Non manual (Lower Grade)	10	4.4%
<u>Class 5</u>		
Routine Grades of Non manual and Skilled Manual	12	5.3%
<u>Class 6</u>		
Manual, Semi-skilled	1	0.4%
<u>Class 7</u>		
Manual, Routine	1	0.4%
	TOTAL	225

From the above table it can be seen that just half of the fathers of pupils attending the school have occupations coming under the first two categories of the Hall-Jones Scale. If the first three categories are grouped together the percentage of fathers with occupations in those three categories totals eighty nine per cent. A total of only six per cent of fathers have occupations in Hall-Jones' last three categories.

APPENDIX 2

LETTERS TO PARENTS

LETTERS TO PARENTS

The following table indicates the number of letters sent home to parents from the period January 1977 to December 1979:-

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>NUMBER OF LETTERS</u>
January 1977 to December 1977	37
January 1978 to December 1978	33
January 1979 to December 1979	36
	—
TOTAL	106
	—

Of these one hundred and six letters, the contents of only two were concerned with matters of school organisation and curriculum. Both of these are relevant to this study and, therefore, the appropriate parts are set out below. The first deals with the introduction of the vertical grouping in the junior classes and the second with the re-organisation of the infant classes which led to the formation of the two parallel classes of third year infants, the subjects of part of this research.

LETTER 1 DATED 7.1.77

(THIRD PARAGRAPH OF A FOUR PARAGRAPH LETTER)

As from year to year adjustments have to be made to obtain the best results in the interests of the children, the junior classes have been banded in order to create stability and systematic progression within the curriculum. Therefore, there are three parallel classes of lower juniors, each consisting of first and second year junior children and three parallel classes of upper juniors, each consisting of third and fourth year children. This system eliminates any form of streaming and enables each child to work to the fullest extent of his/her capacity throughout the primary stage. The syllabus in the basic subjects will be identical in each of the banded classes and close collaboration will be maintained between the teachers responsible for upper and lower juniors respectively. The structure of infant classes remains the same.

LETTER 2 DATED 11.9.78

As Miss Y has been appointed to serve full time on the staff, although the staffing allocation is above normal, I have taken the opportunity to reduce sizes in the infant department which will be an obvious advantage to all the children concerned.

I have, therefore, made slight changes by placing the older second year children with Miss Y, rather than forming a vertically grouped class of older second year infants and younger third year infants and placing them with Mrs. B, as was the case during the last school year.

The second year infants are taught, therefore, by Mrs. K and Miss Y and the third year infants are taught by Mrs. A and Mrs. B. Where children have previously been taught in the workbay classrooms consideration has been given, wherever possible, to placing them in a main classroom this school year.

I wish to re-assure parents that there is no form of streaming in the school but adjustments naturally have to be made from time to time in the best interests of your child/children.

I would like to point out, however, that if there are any queries of an educational nature which give parents cause for concern, you are welcome to contact me for first hand information as, from time to time, there are conflicting reports spread about the school and its achievements which are untrue.

APPENDIX 3

PILOT RESEARCH

PILOT RESEARCH

PUPILS' WRITTEN PERCEPTIONS

During February 1979 the researcher asked two groups of first year juniors to write down their thoughts on, "Being a Junior." Of twenty six pieces of work that were received six are set out below - the two longest pieces of writing, the two shortest and two others of average length. Spelling, punctuation and paragraphing follow the original work. A brief discussion preceeded the children's writing.

THE TWO SHORTEST

I don't like being a Junior because there are test on Friday. Sometimes there is sometimes homework if you are Lazy. We don't have milk but the infants do. Juniors have different. television programmes like viking

I like games because our own teacher duos it.
I like the different T.V.
I like the homework.

TWO OF AVERAGE LENGTH

in this junior I hate having to do so much work at play school I used to play with the cars. In in the Junior we did not have any milk. We did not have any work in the infants school. In the junior we have to do so much tests. In the infants we did not do any tests. I like the somes in the Junior I so much. like the English so moch.

I don't like being in the Juniors on a Friday becase of the Test I am very scared when Mr. --- comes in for the Test.
I also hate school, becase we can't where are home clothes.
I don't like it also becase we don't have Milk.
One thing I do like is Work and Games, in Work I like English, Creative Writing.
It is rather hard to do all of my Work in Hard to finsh all my sums all in 30 or 40 minutes also we

can read a lot more in the juniors. Also to have to do a lot of Work.

THE TWO LONGEST

I don't like the test on a Friday because in the Infants we didn't have it.
In the juniors we have games outside and we have different teachers. We didn't have to do as much work as we do in the juniors and we learn about more things like the Vikings and the Saxons.
I like P.E. and game, I like it in the juniors sometimes because we do more paintings and we make more things.
When we come into the juniors we loose some of our friends because they go into other classes.

The second year juniors bos you around. you do more work. you have games every Monday. I like games. you do English. The juniors go home at five parst four. The infants have milk. The infants go home at quarter parst three. The juniors have homework. The juniors have second sitings. I am in Miss ---. It is frightening wen we go into the junior. the test is hordul. The juniors play on the apparatus. The infants do less work. The juniors stay an extra harf hour longer. I go 20 out of 20 in the test. David ---- is my frind.

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE - LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

FEBRUARY 1979

Dear Parents,

Over the next two years I shall be involved in some research into the problems encountered by children in their transition from infant to the junior stage of Primary Education. Although I shall not be directly involved with your child in this research, I wonder if I could ask for your assistance with a pilot questionnaire I have prepared to aid me in the preparation of my field of enquiry?

If you would be willing to assist me I should be grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire on the basis of what you have already discovered about your child and not as a result of anything you might ask him or her after consulting the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is intended to be completely anonymous and the only personal information required is the sex of your child. To preserve this anonymity a sealed box will be provided in the entrance hall into which envelopes containing the questionnaires may be placed by yourselves, your child or your child's teacher - whichever you prefer. The closing date for the return of the questionnaire is Friday ----

Yours sincerely,

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

CHILD'S SEX

BOY/GIRL

Question 1

At any time since the transfer of your child from the infant department of the school to the junior department has he or she revealed signs of anxiety about school life or some aspect of it which, in your view, have resulted directly from this transfer?

YES/NO

IF YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 IS YES WILL YOU PLEASE CONTINUE AND ANSWER THE REMAINING QUESTIONS.

Question 2

In which of the following ways have these signs of anxiety made themselves manifest to you?

Please indicate as many as are applicable by ticking the appropriate boxes.

- | | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Reluctance to attend school | i. in general | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | ii. on specific days | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Difficulty in getting to sleep | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Sleepwalking | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Bed wetting | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. As a result of direct conversation revealing worries about schoolwork or other aspects of school life | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. An unaccustomed reluctance to discuss school life | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Moodiness, sulkiness, naughtiness or other personality changes | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Loss of appetite | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Psychological illness e.g. unexplained stomach pains, headaches etc. | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- j. Attention seeking ☐
- k. A decline in the quality of social relationships with friends, brothers or sisters ☐
- l. Other indications not mentioned. Please specify below.

.....

Question 3

Can you attempt to specify any particular aspects of this transfer to the junior stage which you feel contributed to this anxiety in your child?

Please indicate by ticking as many of the following as you think are applicable.

- a. The increase in the length of the school day. ☐
- b. The change of classroom area. ☐
- c. The decrease in creative play activities. ☐
- d. The change to a more formal atmosphere. ☐
- e. The change to a vertically grouped situation. ☐
- f. The separation from friends with the transfer of two infant classes into three junior classes. ☐
- g. The change in the format of assemblies. ☐
- h. The changes in dinner time arrangements. ☐
- i. The introduction of the outdoor games lesson. ☐
- j. The introduction of weekly tests in spelling and tables. ☐
- k. Difficulties encountered in schoolwork: -
 - i. In General ☐
 - ii. In Mathematics ☐
 - iii. In Reading ☐
 - iv. In Written Work ☐
 - v. In Topic Work ☐

1. Other aspects not mentioned here. Please specify below.

.....
.....;
.....
.....

Question 4a

In your opinion has your child now fully adjusted to junior school life?

YES / NO

If your answer to question 4a was YES will you please attempt to answer question 4b. If your answer was NO will you please go straight on to question 5.

Question 4b

In your opinion approximately how long did this adjustment to junior school life take? Please tick the most appropriate box.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| i. The first month or less | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. The first half term | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. The first term | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. The first one and a half terms | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Question 5

Are there any ways in which you feel the school could improve its handling of the transfer from the infant stage of education to the junior stage of education?

Please indicate in the space below.

APPENDIX 4

PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS

STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEWS

PUPILS' PRE-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEWS

1. The lower junior classrooms
2. The lower junior teachers
3. Aspects on infant life that might be missed in
the juniors
4. Aspects of junior life to which the pupils are looking
forward
5. Routine of junior school life as compared to that
of infant life
6. Vertical Grouping
7. The significance of friendships to the transfer
8. Schoolwork in the juniors
9. Contact with male teachers

PUPILS' POST-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEWS

1. Thoughts immediately before returning to school
2. First day emotions and experiences
3. Teachers and friends
4. Routine of junior life
5. Aspects of infant life missed
6. Likes, dislikes and surprises of junior life
7. Vertical Grouping and associated factors
8. Junior work - nature, quantity, particular subjects
9. Weekly Test
10. Preference - juniors or infants?

APPENDIX 5

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEWS

INFANT TEACHERS' PRE-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much interest have your pupils show in the impending transfer?
2. In what ways have they or will they be prepared for their new class?
3. How will their division into three junior classes be made?
4. How much pre and post-transfer consultation do you have with the junior teachers with regard to the transfer of pupils?
5. How will your pupils' day change with their transfer to the juniors? How do you think they will react to these changes?
6. How, if at all, will the teaching methods the junior teachers employ differ from those used by the infant teachers?
7. What new areas of the curriculum will the pupils encounter following the transfer?
8. Are there any curriculum areas which you feel may prove especially difficult or worrying for the newly transferred pupils?
9. What aspects of infant life do you think your pupils will miss following their transfer?
10. What aspects of junior school life do you think your pupils will particularly enjoy?
11. How do you think your pupils will react to more contact with male teachers?
12. What effect do you think the vertical grouping situation will have upon the transfer
 - (a) Academically?
 - (b) Socially?
13. Can you name any individual pupils whom you feel will react especially well or especially badly to the transfer?
14. On average how long do you feel it will take pupils to fully adjust to their new junior class and teacher?
15. What kind of questions are posed by parents an Open Evenings about the pupils generally and about the transfer in particular?

16. Do you think the attitudes of the parents to school will change in any way as a result of the transfer?
17. Are you aware of any pressures from parents in relation to what and how you teach in the classroom?
18. Can you think of any situations which arise in the classroom when you were entering into negotiations with your pupils over some aspect of school life or work?

JUNIOR TEACHERS' POST-TRANSFER PERCEPTIONS

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. To what aspects of junior school life do newly transferred pupils find it most difficult to adjust?
2. What symptoms of anxiety or difficulty have they shown?
3. How does their day in the junior department differ from their day in the infant department in terms of its structure?
4. To what new areas of the curriculum have the 1st year juniors been introduced?
5. Are your teaching methods different from those used in the infant department and if so how?
6. How much time do your pupils spend on practical activities? How does this compare with their infant experience?
7. What, if anything, do your pupils miss about infant life?
8. What have they most liked about being juniors?
9. Do you think it is difficult for them to adjust from being oldest infants to youngest juniors? If so in what way is it difficult?
10. Were you aware of any disappointments amongst your pupils as a result of being split up from friends?
11. How do 1st years react to the vertically grouped situation?
12. Do you think vertical grouping aids or hinders the transfer?
13. How do the groups get on (a) Socially? (b) Academically?
14. Have there been any problem areas of the curriculum for the 1st years?
15. Has the weekly test been a problem for any pupils? If so in what way and why?
16. On average how long have pupils taken to settle fully in to class? Have any
17. Is it in your opinion a more difficult move going from infants to juniors than from one class to the next within a department?
18. How well in your opinion have the pupils been prepared for the transfer?
How do you feel this could have been improved?

19. What contact have you had with the parents of newly-transferred pupils?
20. What has been their attitude to the transfer?
21. Are you aware of any pressure from parents directly on your teaching.
22. Can you think of any situation where you enter into negotiations with the children over some aspect of school life or work?

APPENDIX 6

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS

QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 - LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

JUNE 1979

Dear Parents,

As part of a group research project I am looking into the question of the infant - junior transfer and I wonder if you would consider assisting me in this project by completing the enclosed questionnaire?

Because my survey is of a descriptive nature, the questionnaire is of an 'open' design inviting general comments rather than the selection of specific alternatives. If there is insufficient space for your answer beneath the question, please continue on the back of the paper.

The completed questionnaire should be completely anonymous - with only your child's sex and the number of older brothers or sisters revealed. I should be grateful if the questionnaire, in a sealed envelope could be returned to the school by Wednesday 11th July. A sealed box will be provided in the classroom for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

A.W.JONES

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Child's sex : - boy / girl

Has your child any older brothers or sisters who have already transferred to the junior department of Gayton? YES / NO

If the above answer is yes please specify : -
.....

Question 1

From the experiences you have had so far of your child starting school and changing classes, how long do you think he/she will take to settle into the new junior class?

Question 2

What aspects of infant school life do you think your child will miss most of all when he/she transfer to the juniors?

Question 3

What aspects of junior school do you think your child will enjoy most?

Question 4

Can you foresee any aspects of junior school life which may cause your child some concern?

Question 5

How do you feel about your child changing from a single age class of top infants to a vertically grouped class of first and second year juniors?

Question 6

How do you think the structure (i.e. amount of time spent on different activities) of your child's school day will change with the transfer to the junior department?

Question 7

In what ways do you think the teaching methods used in a junior class will differ from those used in an infant class?

Question 8

Do you expect to see any changes in your child's rate of progress in any particular areas of the curriculum as a result of his/her transfer to the junior department?

QUESTIONNAIRE II - LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

November 1979

Dear Parents,

You will recall that last term I asked you to assist me in a group research project by completing a questionnaire concerned with your child's impending transfer to the junior department of Gayton Primary School. I am now into the second half of this research and I wonder if you would consider assisting me by completing the enclosed questionnaire?

Because my survey is of a descriptive nature, the questionnaire is of an 'open' design - inviting general comments rather than the selection of specific alternatives. If there is insufficient space for any answer please continue on the back of the paper.

The completed questionnaire should be anonymous with only your child's sex and the number of older brothers or sisters revealed. I should be grateful if the questionnaire, in a sealed envelope, could be returned to school by Friday 30th November.

With many thanks for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A.W.JONES

QUESTIONNAIRE 11

Child's sex : - Boy / girl

Has your child any older brothers or sisters who have already transferred to the junior department of Gayton?

YES / NO

If the above answer is yes please specify
.....

Question 1

How do you feel your child has settled into his or her new junior class?

Question 2

What aspects, if any, of junior school life have made your child anxious over the past three months?

Question 3

In your opinion which aspects of junior school life have appealed most to your child?

Question 4

Are there any aspects of infant department life which you feel your child now misses with being in the junior department?

Question 5

How do you feel the vertically grouped situation is working in relation to your child a. academically and b. socially?

Question 6

Do you feel that there is any change in the kind and amount of work your child is doing now compared to the work he or she did at infant level?

Question 7

Do you feel that the teaching methods employed in the junior department are different in any way from those employed in the infant department?

Question 8

Have you detected any signs of change in your child's rate of progress (either a slowing down or a speeding up) since he or she transferred to the junior department?

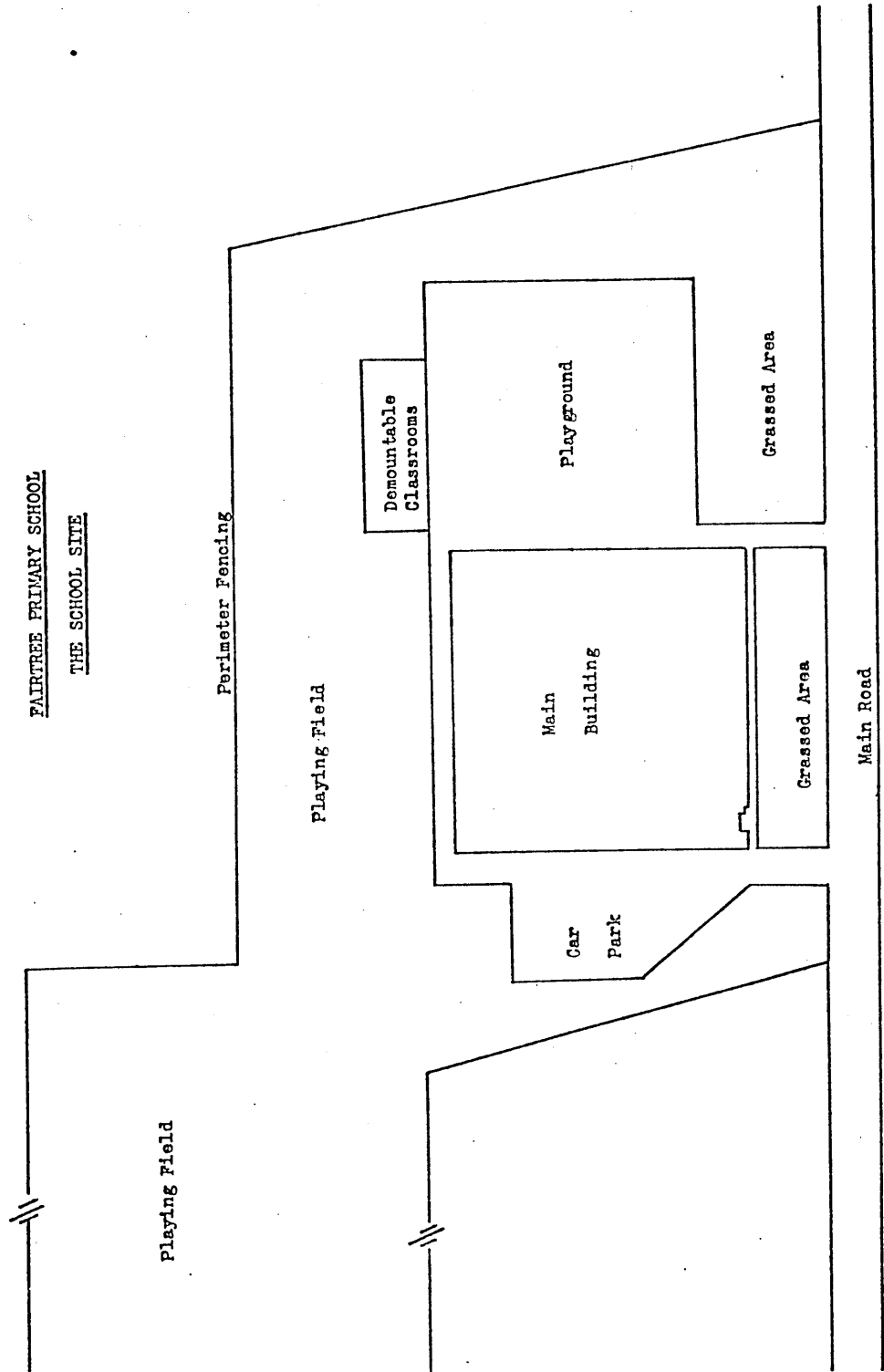
Question 9

From the experience you have had now of your child's transfer from the infant to the junior department, how do you feel the school could improve its handling of this transfer?

APPENDIX 7

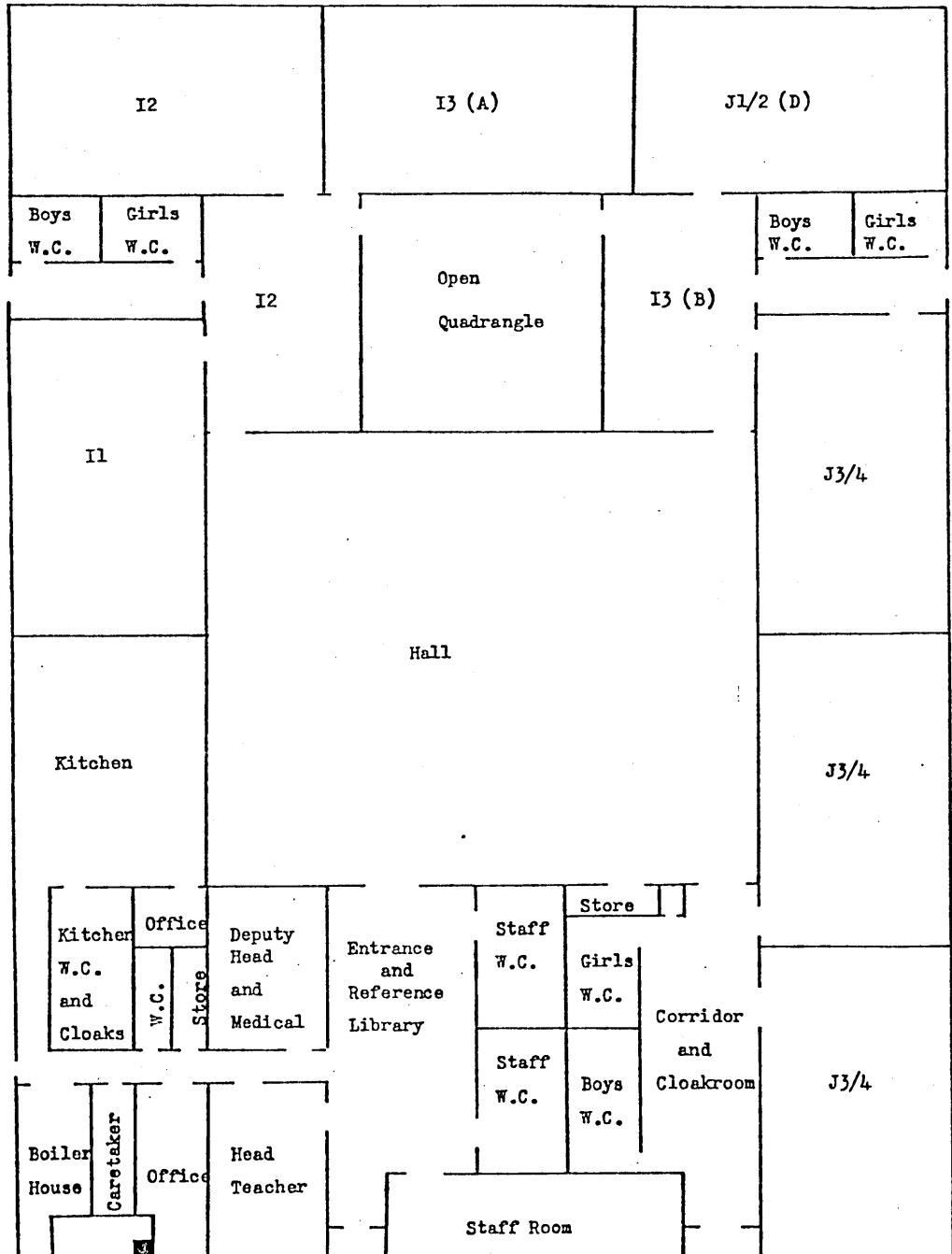
FAIRTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PLANS

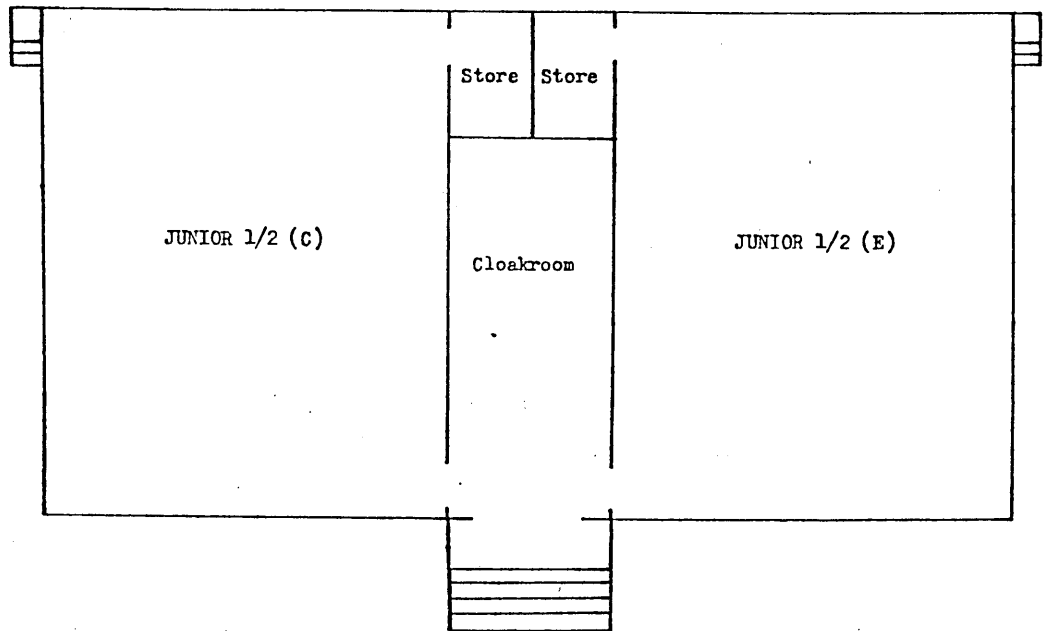


FAIRTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PLAN OF MAIN BUILDING



FAIRTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL
PLAN OF DEMOUNTABLE CLASSROOMS



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